

# COMMUNITY BUILDING



Affiliate of Community Housing Advocates, Inc.



Affiliate of Community Housing Advocates, Inc.



COMMUNITY HOUSING ADVOCATES | MERCY HOUSING AND SHELTER CORPORATION | MY SISTERS' PLACE Winter 2023



Community Housing Advocates has a lot of positive changes in store for 2023, and they would not be possible without our generous supporters and our dedicated staff who bring our mission to life every day. I am truly grateful for you all, and look forward to sharing our growth and success with you this year.

*Kara A. Capone*  
Chief Executive Officer

There are many ways to describe the new year: an opportunity for a clean slate; a time for growth and resolutions; a symbol of change and transition; and a time to reflect on the past while envisioning the future.

Reflecting on the past is an opportunity to review what we do well, what we can improve, and how we can use that knowledge to create a brighter future in our community. Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation's 40th anniversary is a great example. Looking back, who would have thought in 1983 that Mercy would expand from St. Elizabeth House to eleven programs throughout Hartford and Middlesex counties? Although many things have changed over the years, we continue to build upon the values of our founders by serving those most in need with compassion, dignity, and respect.

*"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."  
~ John F. Kennedy*

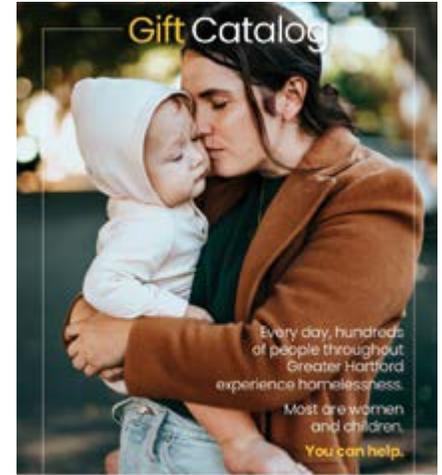


## CONTACT INFORMATION

development@mercyhousingct.org  
860.808.2044

For more information about Mercy Housing and Shelter, visit [www.mercyhousingct.org](http://www.mercyhousingct.org)

For more information about My Sisters' Place, visit [www.sistersplacect.org](http://www.sistersplacect.org)



Our new gift catalog highlights the many specific needs of our clients. Some of those needs include groceries, bus passes, footwear for new jobs, and newborn care bundles. Browse our catalog on-line at [www.ctcha.org/giftcatalog](http://www.ctcha.org/giftcatalog) to see how you can make a difference today.

## CONNECT WITH US!

@mercyhousingct  
@mysistersplace

Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation  
My Sisters' Place

@CTMercyHousing  
@MSPCT

Community Housing Advocates, Inc.  
Mercy Housing & Shelter Corporation  
My Sisters' Place

*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.*

# Multi-Year Grant from Symetra

## ***My Sisters' Place is the recipient of a Symetra Empowers Communities program grant***



The \$90,000 multi-year grant was awarded by Symetra, a national provider of life insurance, annuities and employee benefits, with offices in Enfield and

Farmington. Grounded in the company's diversity, equity and inclusion values, the Symetra Empowers Communities program combines corporate giving, advocacy and engagement to address homelessness and the housing affordability crisis. My Sisters' Place is one of 10 recipient organizations selected for our work to address root causes and systemic challenges to drive long-term change and improve outcomes for underserved women and youth who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Symetra's grant will support My Sisters' Place's Employment and Lifeskills program that provides training, case management, financial literacy training,

access to community resources like higher education, healthcare, and employment services. The funding also will support formerly homeless children in the For the Love of Children Initiative (FLOCI) with recreational opportunities, social and emotional development supports, and math, reading, and computer skills.

"My Sisters' Place is fortunate to partner with Symetra through the Empowers Communities Program grant to create long-term positive change in our



communities with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion." shared Kara A. Capone, Chief Executive Officer. "Although homelessness has devastating impacts on children, the research has shown supportive housing programs, such as those offered by My Sisters' Place, and our Employment and Lifeskills and For the Love of Children Initiative

(FLOCI) help children, youth and families rebuild their support systems and support parents in their critical role in their children's lives. Symetra's commitment to addressing root causes and systemic challenges allows My Sisters' Place to provide the evidence-based interventions that allow the vulnerable households we serve to break the generational cycle of homelessness."



# HOLIDAY WISH PROGRAM WRAP-UP



This year's Holiday Wish Program at Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation and My Sisters' Place was one for the record books! 108 donors and sponsors contributed nearly 500 toys to this year's program, and over \$8,000 was raised through our online platforms. In addition, many volunteer groups took a shift in our holiday workshop to help wrap gifts. As a result, over 300 program participants in Hartford and Middlesex Counties were able to receive two gifts and one gift card this holiday season!

## Our sincere thanks to this year's corporate and private sponsors, donors, and volunteers:

- Christ the King Parish
- El Show de Analeh Toy Drive
- EXP Realty
- Franklin Trust Federal Credit Union
- LIMRA
- MahoneySabol
- PayHub Payments
- Pratt and Whitney
- PWC
- Quadient
- St. George Church
- St. John Fisher Community
- St. Pius X Church and Friary
- The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- The Hartford Judicial Branch
- The IRS
- The Metropolitan District Commission
- The Myles Gosselin Foundation
- The Vernon D. and Florence E. Roosa Family Foundation Memorial Fund
- Travelers
- UConn Panhellenic Council
- Windsor High School
- Youth in Action



We also offer a special thank you to our individual donors and volunteers, without whom this effort would not be possible!

# MERCY HOUSING TURNS 40!



## NEW ROLE, BUT NOT NEW TO CHA

Diane Bengston became involved with Mercy Housing and Shelter in 2017. She served on the Board of Directors and assisted with the affiliation of Mercy Housing and Shelter and My Sisters' Place to create Community Housing Advocates (CHA). She remained on the CHA Board and served on the Governance Committee and Development Committee for the past several years. This past September, Diane stepped up to become the Board Chair for CHA.



**Diane Bengston**  
Chair, Community Housing Advocates Board of Directors



Affiliate of Community Housing Advocates, Inc.

***This year is a special one for Mercy Housing and Shelter. 2023 commemorates 40 years of helping individuals and families in need!***



Forty years ago, the Sisters of Mercy of Connecticut established Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation to help individuals in need of shelter and food. Since 1983, Mercy Housing has grown tremendously; expanding its services to nine distinct programs at six different sites. Founded in the belief that all people deserve the right to these basic needs, Mercy Housing continues to provide shelter, food, and other resources to over 2,100 individuals and families in Hartford and Middlesex counties.

Celebrate with us – visit our social media pages throughout the year to learn more!

“To have Diane be part of CHA since its inception, coupled with her extensive career experience, positions her as an extremely effective leader of our Board,” says Kara Capone, CEO of CHA. “We are so fortunate to have her at our helm.”

Diane is a recently retired Executive Vice President of Human Resources from Travelers Insurance Company. She was responsible for all Human Resource disciplines including Talent Acquisition, Compensation and Benefits and Diversity and Inclusion. She started her career at Travelers 42 years ago as a programmer trainee, moving into Human Resources and serving in many different roles to end her career as the Human Resources lead, responsible for 30,000 employees.

In addition to her CHA involvement, Diane is a Corporator for Hartford Hospital and served on the Hartford Hospital 2022 Gala committee. She also is a volunteer for Lasagna Love, an outreach program serving meals to individuals and families in the Greater Hartford area. She is married and a mother of two adult sons and lives in Rocky Hill, CT. She is also Nana for her three cherished grandchildren.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT



1.



3.



5.



2.



4.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.

1. Paula (center) from Quilts2Heal brought hand-made quilts for the families at My Sisters' Place.
2. The Analeh Toy Drive benefitted the children of My Sisters' Place this holiday season.
3. In September, the Love Kitchen from Little Caesars rolled in and provided pizza to the visitors of our Friendship Center.
4. Our CEO, Kara Capone cut the ribbon to our food pantry this fall, now open to the community.
5. My Brother's Keeper, a group of family and friends, provided gifts, hot cocoa and holiday cheer to the residents of our Sue Ann Shay Place Apartments.
6. 100 turkeys were delivered to our St. Elizabeth House by Mike Stacy of Lite 100.5 FM WRCH from Mill Brook Farms.
7. Kathy Shaw, COO (left) and Sharmila Swenson, VP of Public Affairs at Symetra posed in front of Sue Ann Shay Place Apartments during a site visit.
8. CVS Project Health visited our residential sites in October to provide free health screenings.
9. Mike & Mary Smile Club members prepared chicken pot pie and cupcakes for all of the residents of our St. Elizabeth House and visitors to our Friendship Center during the holiday season!
10. Bank of America provided Halloween costumes to all of the children at My Sisters' Place.
11. Gengras Chevrolet dropped off a generous check during the holidays. From L to R: Gengras General Manager, Krista, CHA CEO, Kara Capone, and Gengras Parts Manager, Lynn.
12. A group of employees from Travelers assisted with wrapping gifts for our Holiday Wish Program.

*Save the Date!*



**HOPE AND HOME**  
CELEBRATION 2023

On October 14, 2022, we welcomed almost 250 of our closest friends to our 4th Annual Hope and Home Celebration at the Hartford Marriott Downtown.

Almost \$200,000 was raised which will go towards the Youth Program at My Sisters' Place and the Friendship Center (soup kitchen) at Mercy Housing. We also took the time to celebrate the 40th anniversary of My Sisters' Place by highlighting its accomplishments through the years.

Thank you to our guests, donors and sponsors for their generous support of both My Sisters' Place and Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation. Your contributions to this event made it memorable!

Mark your calendars –  
the 5th annual Hope and Home Celebration will be on

**OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**

at the Hartford Marriott Downtown!

If your corporation or business is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact [development@mercyhousingct.org](mailto:development@mercyhousingct.org)