



COMMUNITY BUILDING

FALL 2026

A NEW BEGINNING AT 66 Loretta's Journey

CEO INSIGHTS



Protecting Educational Stability for CT Children Experiencing Homelessness

An unfortunate truth is that every day, children become homeless in Connecticut. According to the Annual Point-in-Time Count, 592 children were experiencing homelessness during the one-night count conducted in January 2025. Over the course of a year, that number is estimated to be approximately 5,000 students.

What many people don't realize is that, for a child, homelessness isn't just a housing problem. It is an education problem too. During this past legislative session, we were able to advocate successfully for **"An Act Concerning the Education of Homeless Children and Youth."** This legislation codifies key protections of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act into Connecticut law, helping ensure that students experiencing homelessness continue to have access to educational services, school stability, and transportation regardless of their housing status. By taking this step, Connecticut is taking greater responsibility for maintaining these protections rather than relying entirely on the federal government to do so.

This legislation recognizes that educational stability is a critical part of homelessness intervention. When a family moves into a shelter, motel, or another temporary living arrangement, a child may suddenly face the prospect of changing schools,

Continued on inside ➤

SHE WAS FOUND WANDERING AROUND BUSHNELL PARK, WHERE SHE OFTEN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SLEEP ON A PARK BENCH.

AT 66, Loretta never imagined she would find herself homeless. After leaving an unhealthy relationship, she faced a series of setbacks, including a hospitalization and a breakdown in communication about her housing assistance. As a result, she missed critical deadlines and lost her apartment.

Eventually she was evicted. Living on a fixed income through Social Security, Loretta suddenly found herself without a safe place to sleep.

For a senior citizen, homelessness is especially frightening. Every night brings uncertainty. Simple tasks most of us take for granted like finding a safe place to rest, accessing a bathroom, staying warm, or protecting personal belongings become daily challenges. Loretta was even forced to sleep in a local park, wondering what tomorrow would bring.

When Mercy's Homeless Outreach team met Loretta in September 2025, they discovered that her housing voucher, the very thing needed to get her back into a home, was about to expire. Without immediate intervention, she risked losing one of her last opportunities for permanent housing.

"As an older adult in our community, Loretta experienced homelessness due to circumstances beyond her control," explained *Mercy Outreach Case Manager* Ciera Smith. "Her situation highlighted how quickly unexpected life events can lead to housing instability, particularly for vulnerable individuals."



Ciera Smith

Mercy Outreach Case Manager

The Mercy Outreach team acted quickly. They advocated successfully to secure an extension of Loretta's voucher, then stood along side her through every step of the housing search.

After months of determination and advocacy, the team found Loretta a safe, affordable apartment and connected her to resources. In May 2026, she unlocked the door to her new home.

Thanks to your support, today Loretta no longer worries about where she will sleep at night. Instead, she is settling into her new home with the comfort, dignity, and peace of mind every person deserves.



transportation challenges, losing connections with friends and teachers, disruptions to special education services, difficulty obtaining school records, and missed days of school—all while the family is trying to resolve its housing crisis. We know that housing instability can contribute to chronic absenteeism, academic underperformance, increased mobility and school transfers, and disruptions in special education services. Protecting a child's connection to school can provide an important source of stability during an otherwise incredibly uncertain time.

Connecticut has made clear that **a family's housing crisis should not become a child's educational crisis.**

At a time when federal policies and funding for homelessness services remain uncertain, Connecticut's decision to preserve these protections at the state level is a meaningful investment in the well-being and future of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Kara A. Capone
Chief Executive Officer

Build a Career that Changes Lives—Join Our Team

What if your next job could be more than just a paycheck?

What if you could build meaningful relationships, support your community, and make a positive difference in someone's life every day?

At Community Housing Advocates, we believe meaningful work is work that gives back. Our team members help individuals and families navigate challenges, achieve greater stability, maintain safe and welcoming communities, and reach their goals.

We are currently hiring for several positions with Mercy Housing and My Sisters' Place and are looking for compassionate, dedicated individuals who want to put their skills to work in a field that truly matters.

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

- Employment Specialist
- Community Social Worker
- Case Manager
- Maintenance Worker
- Executive Assistant
- Monitor

Whether your strengths are in social services, administration, employment support, property maintenance, or working directly with community members, there may be a place for you on our team.



**Ready to
make a
difference?**

Contact HR Director **Lisa Brice** at lbrice@mercyhousingct.org.
For job descriptions and to apply, visit <https://ctcha.org/careers/>.

A New Look for the Work We Do: Introducing Refreshed Brand Identities

Our organizations are evolving – our visual identities should too

We are excited to introduce you to our refreshed brand identities for Mercy Housing and My Sisters' Place, including new logos and redesigned websites that more clearly reflect who we are, what we do, and, most importantly, the people and communities we serve.

As our organizations have grown and evolved, so has the work we do. This refresh gives us an opportunity to ensure that the way we present ourselves reflects the strength, purpose, and spirit behind that work, while honoring the mission and values that have guided us all along.

REFLECTING WHO WE ARE

We worked closely with our designer to create visual identities that are unique to each organization and rooted in our individual missions and purpose. The refreshed identities feature modern, welcoming, and distinctive imagery and colors designed to bring each organization's story and personality to life.

But this work is about more than new logos, it's about creating a clearer and more meaningful way to communicate with the people we serve, our partners,

supporters, staff, and the broader community. Our redesigned websites will make it easier to understand our work, connect with our organizations, find resources, and learn how to get involved.

Mercy Housing's new website is expected to launch by October, while the My Sisters' Place and Community Housing Advocates (CHA) websites are expected to be completed by the end of the year. While CHA will have a redesigned website, its logo will remain unchanged.

LOOKING AHEAD

A brand is more than colors, images, or a logo. It's a reflection of who we are and the purpose that brings us together.

We're proud of how our organizations have grown, grateful for the people and communities at the heart of our work, and excited to share these refreshed identities. The look may be new, but our commitment remains the same: to strengthen our communities and help create a future where everyone has a place to call home.



**MERCY HOUSING
& SHELTER CORPORATION**



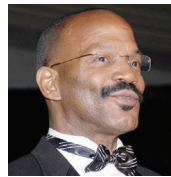
My Sisters' Place

DONOR spotlight

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO TONY MARCH and the Pay It Backward Foundation for their continued commitment to supporting the mission of Mercy Housing.

Tony's connection to Mercy Housing is deeply personal. Having grown up in an impoverished and unstable environment, he accessed some of Mercy's services decades ago. That experience helped shape a lifelong commitment to creating opportunity, breaking cycles of poverty, and helping others build healthier, more hopeful futures.

Today, Tony is a trailblazing entrepreneur and philanthropist who has donated millions of dollars to organizations working to reduce poverty and advance innovative approaches to healing, personal growth, and renewal.



Through the Pay It Backward Foundation, he continues to invest in programs that empower individuals and strengthen communities.

We are honored to be among the organizations Tony and the Pay It Backward Foundation have chosen to support. Their generosity since 2001 is not only an investment in Mercy Housing, it is an investment in the people and communities we serve, and in the possibility of a brighter future for all.

We are profoundly grateful for Tony's partnership, generosity, and enduring belief in the power of giving back.

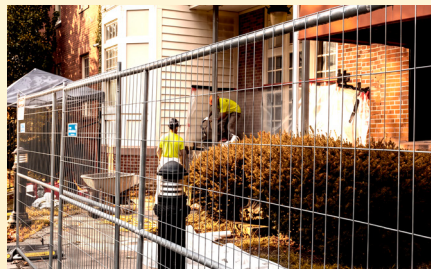
A NEW CHAPTER FOR ST. ELIZABETH HOUSE: Preserving a Legacy of *Hope*

THE SOUNDS OF CONSTRUCTION and the scent of fresh paint are filling the halls of Mercy Housing's historic St. Elizabeth House, signaling the start of an important new chapter.



In July, work began on a \$6.5 million renovation of the 219-year-old building at 118 Main Street in Hartford. Home to the Friendship Center soup kitchen and day shelter, clothing closet, and four residential programs, St. Elizabeth House serves thousands of people each year seeking food, shelter, stability, and support.

The renovation aims to create bright, cheerful, safe, and comfortable spaces that serve as a healing sanctuary for individuals navigating recovery and mental health crises, who are participating in our residential programs. Improvements also include a larger dining room to welcome more Friendship Center visitors, upgrades to the food pantry and clothing closet, renovated bathrooms, showers and laundry areas, and critical improvements to the roof, HVAC system, flooring, and lighting. Recognizing the growing number of older adults and individuals with disabilities accessing Mercy's services the renovations will also improve accessibility and create a more comfortable environment for everyone who walks through the doors.



"This work has been a long time coming," said Mercy Housing CEO Kara Capone. "Each year, the Friendship Center serves more than 75,000 meals, while hundreds of individuals turn to our residential programs for support and stability. We are committed to ensuring that our beloved St. Elizabeth House continues to provide the safe, welcoming, and supportive environment they deserve.

A project of this magnitude requires a significant investment, and we are deeply grateful to the partners and donors whose generosity is helping bring this vision to life."

Thanks to support from the Connecticut OPM Nonprofit Grant Program, HUD Community Project Funding, and private donors, Mercy Housing has secured \$4.45 million toward the project and continues to raise the remaining funds needed to complete the transformation.

When renovations are completed in July 2027, St. Elizabeth House will continue its legacy as a place where **history and hope meet**, providing safety, dignity, and opportunity for thousands of people for generations to come.

Investing in Children's Futures, One Backpack at a Time

AS SUMMER CAME TO AN END, families prepared for the excitement and challenges of a new school year. While many children look forward to seeing friends and learning new things, the cost of school supplies, backpacks, uniforms, and shoes can create significant stress for families already facing financial hardship.



At **My Sisters' Place** (MSP), helping children begin the school year with confidence is a priority. During MSP's annual Back-to-School Picnic Celebration in August, school-aged child living in MSP supportive housing received a brand-new backpack of their choice, filled with essential school supplies, along with new school uniforms and shoes selected to match their personal preferences.

The joy on the children's faces as they picked out their new items was matched only by the relief and gratitude expressed by their parents. These simple but meaningful gifts help ensure that every child starts the school year feeling prepared, confident, and ready to succeed.

"It's important to us that every child who enters our program receives the support they need to succeed in school and build a strong foundation for the rest of their lives," said MSP Youth Coordinator Kristen Wieber.



Kristen Wieber

MSP Youth
Coordinator

Children who have experienced homelessness often face the lasting effects of trauma, which can impact their academic performance, emotional well-being, and ability to connect with peers. MSP's Back-to-School Celebration is one of many programs designed to provide the encouragement, stability, and resources children need to overcome these challenges and build a brighter future.

This special event would not have been possible without the generosity of our community. We are deeply grateful to everyone who purchased items from our wish list, as well as the dedicated volunteers from Aetna, M&T Bank, and Allied World Assurance, whose support helped make the day memorable for every child. Together, we are giving children the tools they need to start the school year strong and the confidence to reach their full potential.

IMPACTING LIVES

Affecting Change



HOW ONE FAMILY IS THRIVING WITH THE SUPPORT OF **MY SISTERS' PLACE**

For Elizabeth, home means more than having a roof overhead. It means knowing her two daughters have the stability, encouragement, and opportunities they need to dream about their futures.

As a single mother, Elizabeth has worked hard to rebuild her life after experiencing homelessness. Over the past eight years, My Sisters' Place (MSP) has been part of that journey, providing not only housing stability but also a community where her family has been encouraged, supported, and celebrated every step of the way.

Today, Elizabeth works part time in a medical office while raising her daughters, Mary, 14, and Lily, 9. Both girls attend school in a nearby suburban town through the state's School Choice program and are flourishing.

Mary has earned strong grades and is excited to begin high school this fall, where she plans to try out for the volleyball team. Lily has made remarkable progress in reading and continues to shine in math which is her favorite subject.

Beyond academics, the family has found a true sense of belonging through My Sisters' Place. Whether they're baking together or exploring new places on field trips through MSP's Youth Program or celebrating the holidays with other families during MSP's annual celebrations, these shared experiences have helped create lasting memories and strengthened their confidence.

Today, Elizabeth and her daughters are not simply getting by, they are thriving. Their story is a testament to what is possible when families have stable housing, meaningful support, and a community that believes in them.

Because of the generosity of donors like you, families like Elizabeth's have the opportunity to build brighter futures filled with hope, opportunity, and the simple joy of watching children grow up in a safe, stable home.



- 1** Girl Scouts from West Hartford showed kindness in action by donating sandwiches to Mercy Housing's Friendship Center, ensuring each visitor had a meal made with care.
- 2** Volunteers from Trumpf were introduced to the impactful work done at Mercy Housing as they completed various projects during their Day of Service.
- 3** Vox Church served breakfast at Mercy Housing's Friendship Center and organized donations in the basement - a bright start to everyone's day!
- 4** Partnership for Strong Communities brought their joy of helping others to Mercy Housing as they served meals to residents of St. Elizabeth House and visitors to the Friendship Center.
- 5** Heads Up! Hartford campers spent three days building leadership skills while giving back to Mercy Housing, organizing the food pantry and clothing closet at St. Elizabeth House to create a welcoming space for those in need.
- 6** Eversource held its annual cookout for the residents of Mercy's St. Elizabeth House, and extended their kindness to include a well-attended clothing giveaway outside the Friendship Center.
- 7** Interns from The Hartfords rolled up their sleeves to help Mercy prepare for renovations at 118 Main Street by organizing the food pantry and removing fixtures from the clothing closet.
- 8** Rain and construction didn't derail Corbin Advisors' morning at Mercy Housing - they shifted gears and brought their clothing and household goods giveaway to the front of the building!
- 9** The Metropolitan District Commission Internship program held its annual Day of Service at Mercy's St. Elizabeth House, clearing out the basement and holding a clothing giveaway.
- 10** The Pratt & Whitney HR team came together to give back at Mercy Housing, hosting a clothing giveaway for the community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information visit
www.ctcha.org
www.mercyhousingct.org
www.sistersplacect.org

CONNECT WITH US!



Due to space limitations we are unable to include photos of all the great support we receive. However, we are grateful to you all nonetheless.



Wait Until You See This Year's Auction Items!

Imagine flying a plane, finding your inner gourmet with a cooking class experience and getaway for two, or cheering on the New York Giants **AND** the New England Patriots from great seats. These are just a few of the exciting experiences up for grabs at this year's Hope & Home Celebration benefiting Mercy Housing and My Sisters' Place.

The celebration takes place **Friday, October 16**, at 6 p.m. at the Bristol Event Center. The evening begins with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, live music and a silent auction, followed by dinner, a live auction, a brief inspiring program and a Help for Housing moment.

More Than a Gala — An Opportunity to Change Lives

The Hope & Home Celebration is more than an evening of fun and incredible auction packages. Funds raised help Mercy Housing and My Sisters' Place provide vital support to individuals and families facing hunger, homelessness and housing instability in Greater Hartford and Middlesex County.

Join us October 16 for an evening of fun, fellowship and purpose — and help create hope, provide homes and change lives.

Can't attend? You can still make a difference!

Make a donation or participate in the silent auction from wherever you are. You do not need to attend the event to win silent auction items.

Early bidding begins October 2.

Simply scan the QR code to visit the Hope & Home website or enter the event link in your browser: <https://onecau.se/hopehome2026>

