

Community



Unity House

Empowering Lives. Securing Futures.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission

To empower and enrich the lives of people in recovery, coping with a mental illness, and/or diagnosed with a developmental disability. This is accomplished by offering services and supports in an inclusive, person-centered environment.

Vision

All individuals are respected and lead lives of personal fulfillment and acceptance within our community.

Core Values

Honesty, Integrity, Respect

2024 Board of Directors

Kenneth Knight – *President*
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Richard Slagle – *Secretary*
Bradley Chapman – *Treasurer*

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Christopher Sloan
Shari Weiss

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Chief People Officer

Chris Iven
Chief Advancement Officer

Joanna Viggiano
Chief Financial Officer

A Strong Community

Dear Friends,

Unity House was founded by a community of people dedicated to ensuring that all people get a shot at their best lives, regardless of their ability. Today, you are that community. We can't thank you enough.

In 2024, **your advocacy and financial contributions did so much.** Through Unity House, you:

- provided housing, counseling, skill training and respect to nearly 700 people facing major life challenges. Each of those people have a story, and each grew brighter because of you.
- delivered a bonus and new growth opportunities for our direct support professionals - the beating heart of our mission. Our DSPs and managers earned 44 national credentials in 2024, resulting in a wage boost for each.
- made it possible for Unity House to win plaudits from auditors of all three state agencies that regulate our work. One auditor said she wished every organization supporting people with disabilities were run so well.

In short, **2024 was a great year, and it's because of you** – our amazing donors, volunteers and staff.

The future – 2025 and beyond – will be challenging. We expect our ongoing staffing crisis to continue. We face uncertainty in the government funding we rely on. And we know the need for our services will only grow – especially for people struggling with mental illness and substance use disorder.

To meet these challenges, we're launching a new three-year strategic plan, full of ambitious goals to better deliver on our cause. And, we have a strong community of support – that's you! Together, we'll take advantage of every opportunity and overcome every challenge to empower people with disabilities.

You make our community stronger. Thank you!



Elizabeth Smith
Chief Executive Officer



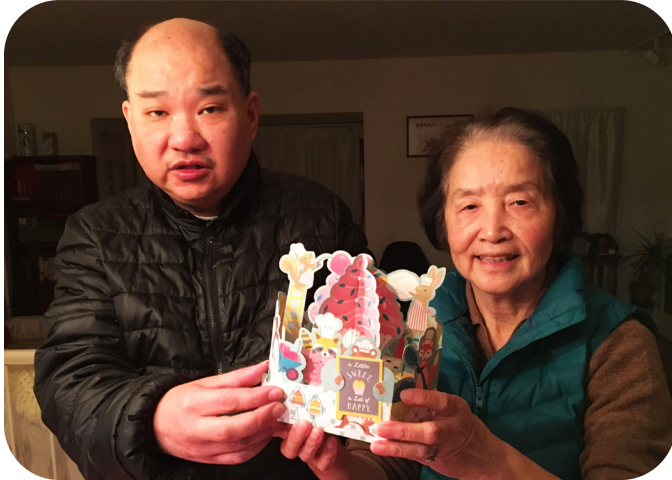
Kenneth Knight
Board President

On the cover:

Ithaca College seniors Catherine Papa (left) and Abigail Chesshire (right) intern at Unity House as Community Integration Specialists, gaining hands-on experience supporting people with disabilities at our Catherwood Road location. They are pictured with Ithaca Day Services participant Jessica Parsons.

Confidence in Care

Kang Meng has received residential and day services from Unity House for 30 years. His sister, Hsien-Ann, is a music professor at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. Here, she shares their family's story and how Unity House has made an impact on their lives:



Kang and his mother, Hung-Yuan

Kang was born in Tainan, Taiwan, in 1970. Due to an unfortunate health event, he developed seizures as a toddler and was later diagnosed with Mild Intellectual Disability.

In 1980, my parents gave up their prestigious teaching positions in Taiwan and moved to Rochester, New York. At the time, my aunt and uncle were living in Ithaca and recommended a neurologist in Rochester to help with Kang's health. They encouraged my parents to move to the U.S. so Kang could receive better medical care and a quality education.

Eventually, my parents relocated us to Maryland for work, and Kang graduated from Rock Terrace High School in Rockville, Maryland. After graduation, my parents and Kang were unsure of his next steps, and it was during this time that our Ithaca friends connected them with Unity House.

The day in 1995 when my parents brought Kang to live in the State Street group home was bittersweet for them. We later heard that, when seeing Kang was a little sad about leaving our parents, his case manager had the idea of asking Kang if he wanted to go and get some ice cream. That was exactly what Kang needed and it really helped him begin his new life at Unity House.

“With the support of Unity House... Kang has been able to lead an independent life and grow into the person he is today.”



Ann and Kang

Since then, we've been gratified to see that, with the support of Unity House and Challenge Industries staff, Kang has been able to lead an independent life and grow into the person he is today. Through Supported Employment services, Kang has worked at Longview Nursing Home and Ithaca College's dish rooms, where he earned several awards for his attendance and outstanding work. He also receives Day Habilitation services.

Today, he is part of the Community-Based Prevocational services through Challenge, which has helped him stay

engaged with the community and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Kang is also a valued member at St. John's Church in Ithaca, where he was baptized and is a regular reader for Sunday services.

Kang visited my parents and me on all major holidays. When the Greyhound bus service to Maryland stopped running, my father and the house manager arranged for staff to drop Kang off in Lewisburg, PA, where we would meet them. This thoughtful

consideration from Unity House made it possible for Kang to maintain his close family connections.

Though it was always difficult for my parents to have Kang so far away, they were reassured by the care he received at Unity House. Through all the ups and downs Kang faced, the house managers and staff worked closely with Kang and kept us well informed.

In honor of my parents, who have since passed away, I continue the legacy of supporting Unity House, for which they were so thankful. I also extend my gratitude to all Unity House staff who have supported Kang over the years.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2024 (unaudited)

For the year ending December 31, 2024, Unity House’s revenue increased to \$27.8 million (from \$24.1 million in 2023). Expenses were \$26.0 million.

The 15% growth in revenue was driven by increases in Medicaid rates; billing units of service; OMH contracts in Cayuga, Tompkins and Wayne Counties; and our investment and endowment accounts.

Organizational expenses grew by 13% in 2024. This rise can be attributed to maintenance expenses, which increased due

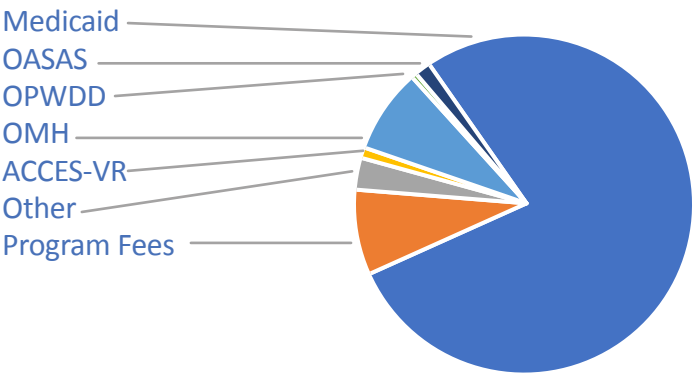
to planned repairs and other work. In addition, program costs were significantly higher due to outsourced temporary staffing utilized by our IRAs; as of December 31, we had approximately 91 open positions.

We are looking forward to 2025 for a year filled with growth and development.

Joanna Viggiano, Chief Financial Officer

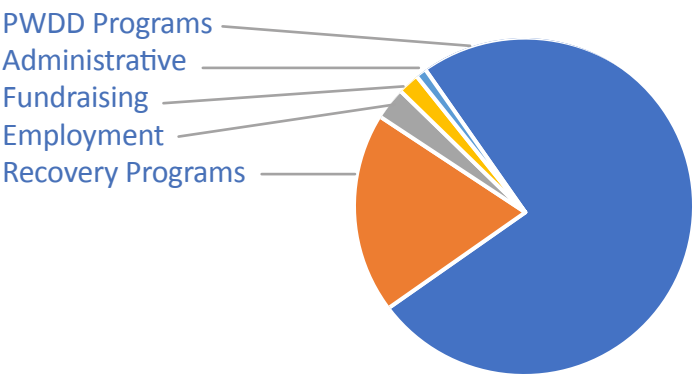
REVENUE

Medicaid	\$21,588,849	78%
Program Fees	\$2,246,431	8%
OMH	\$2,272,093	8%
Other	\$949,879	3%
ACCES-VR	\$230,145	1%
OASAS	\$391,521	1.5%
OPWDD	\$91,207	0.5%
Total Revenue	\$27,770,124	



EXPENSES

PWDD Programs	\$19,402,954	75%
Recovery Programs	\$4,949,447	19%
Employment	\$903,951	3%
Fundraising	\$471,044	2%
Administrative	\$299,872	1%
Total Expense	\$26,027,268	



Unity House Giving Circles A New Way to Belong

To celebrate the dedication of Unity House’s most loyal supporters, we’ve created four giving circles. Members of each circle will be invited to special events and honored next year in the annual report.

1977 Society

Commemorating the year of Unity House’s founding, the 1977 Society honors leadership donors who give \$1,000 or more each year to advance our mission.

Legacy Circle

The Legacy Circle celebrates those who have made a lasting commitment by including Unity House in their estate plans.

Evergreen Society

Evergreen Society members provide steady support year-round through regular monthly or scheduled contributions.

Loyalty Circle

The Loyalty Circle recognizes donors whose sustained generosity has powered our work for five or more consecutive years.

Please email development@unityhouse.org for more information.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY

Auburn Day Hab participants presented their first-ever winter talent show at the Carriage House Theater. They showcased their musical abilities alongside staff and their peers.



APRIL

Our PROSperity mental health program hosted a luncheon to celebrate the end of their spring 2024 semester.

Congratulations to Shannon and Jessica on their certificates of achievement for Most Improved and Best Attendance!



MAY

Thirty community members, including PROs participants and staff, gathered to walk around Seward Park in Auburn to raise awareness of mental illness. Prior to the walk, participants told their own mental health stories, painted rocks, enjoyed refreshments and played cornhole.



JUNE

Ithaca Day Services' summer talent show at Stewart Park was a huge success. Drawing over 100 people to support people with disabilities, they sang, danced, and showcased their talents. Special thanks to Amanda Maestro-Scherer of Maestro Music Therapy for leading a group in their own Unity House rendition of "My Favorite Things."

JULY

State Senator Rachel May and Cayuga County constituent liaison Aileen McNabb-Coleman visited our



Auburn Day Hab location at Market Street. Thanks to a grant secured by Senator May, we are making significant accessibility improvements at Auburn Day Hab, our North Street Road IRA and at Grace House.

AUGUST

Auburn Day Hab hosted a carnival in Market Street Park in downtown Auburn. The free, public event featured a dunk tank, carnival games, balloon animals and more. More than 100 community members came out for the fun and to enjoy the warm summer evening.



OCTOBER

More than 50 friends gathered at the Auburn Holiday Inn for Unity House's annual donor appreciation breakfast. UES program participant Sara Hutchings shared insights on the career-specific vocational training program, which helps people with disabilities gain the skills and training needed for workplace success.

DECEMBER

CEO Liz Smith presented Auburn Day Hab participant Natasha Calderon with a framed copy of her "Christmas Lights" painting. Natasha's artwork was featured on our 2024 holiday cards.



PROGRAM UPDATES 2024

PWDD Day Services *for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities*

In spite of a staffing shortage, Unity House continues to find new ways to provide enriching programs to more people with developmental disabilities. Increased funding from donors and others allowed us to support 112 people through our Self



Direction program in 2024. That's up 40% from 2023. And our Day Habilitation programs – one in Auburn and one in Ithaca – now support 176 people, up 8% from 2023.

“Care managers from other organizations like the variety we provide and the collaborations we have,” said Program Director Aaron Brozon. Thanks to those partnerships, Day Hab participants get to do music therapy, horseback riding, CrossFit and many other enriching activities. With referrals to Day Hab up, the wait list has grown. “We could support more people if we could hire more staff to do the work,” Aaron said.

MH Residential Services *for people diagnosed with mental illness*



Our Certified Treatment Apartments program began offering more enrichment events in 2024, thanks to support from donors, volunteers and partners. Biweekly activities have included game nights, cookouts and making crafts such as wind chimes and paper mâché masks.

“These activities get people more involved and give them something healthy to do together,” said Program Director Judi Magee. She also said that participants are making stronger social connections, which aids in healing.

Unity House's Supportive Housing program provides rental stipends, regular visits and phone support to people with mental illness. In 2024, the program provided 110 stipends for 129 people in Cayuga, Tompkins and Wayne counties. Judi said she plans to expand the program to provide support for more people, if she can hire enough qualified staff.

PWDD Residential Services *for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities*



In 2024, we made great progress on our plan to ensure that people with disabilities can stay in the homes they love for as long as they need. We won four state and local grants to improve accessibility at six locations. Thanks to those grants and other gifts from Unity House donors, we're making more than \$800,000 in upgrades. They include renovations to entrances, restrooms, flooring and fixtures as well as a new ceiling track lift system. The improvements will allow residents with mobility issues to move about with greater autonomy as they age.

We're grateful to state Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember John Lemondes for their help in securing grants to make improvements at two residences and our Day Hab in Auburn. The other two grants will help pay for major renovations at our Green Street IRA in Ithaca.

Herman navigates the new ramp entry at our North Street Road IRA with help from Assistant Program Manager Rachel Longley.

Unity Employment Services (UES) *for people with disabilities who want to work*

We're among 15 organizations statewide that are piloting an intensive employment program called Career Services Vocational Training (CSVTV) for people with developmental disabilities. In 2024, about 15 participants learned from industry experts in their chosen fields. Over 12 weeks, participants get classroom instruction and hands-on training, which they then use on the job.

Five CSVTV participants have already secured paid internships. They include Robert (at right), who was recently hired at Momma Maria NY Pizza near Auburn. He plans to master every step of the pizza-making process, deep frying and other food prep.

To make the best job matches, we now partner with 90 local employers – up from 77 in 2023. Lack of transportation prevents about 12 qualified people in the program from working regularly. We are seeking funding to address the issue.



Grace House *for people recovering from substance use disorders*

After expanding our capacity to support mothers in recovery and their children in 2023, our efforts hit full stride in 2024. The program was at or near full capacity throughout the year, providing housing and other support to seven mothers in recovery as well as their nine children.

Each family has a story. Kelli graduated from family treatment court and is taking online classes to become a certified recovery peer advisor. Her three children, who are able to live with her, are doing well. Renee also graduated from treatment court and is earning her GED while in our program. She plans to move with her six-year-old son to the Binghamton area soon. Others in the program have regained custody of their children, gained employment, and begun to live independently.

“This progress would not be possible without everyone’s hard work, varied experiences and our increased ability to provide person-centered, trauma-informed care,” said Program Director Dorothy Radcliff.



Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) *for people diagnosed with mental illness*

Unity House’s PROS program is expanding to meet a growing need. The program, which provides psychiatric rehabilitation, treatment and group support for adults with mental illness, had 54 people enrolled and regularly attending at the end of 2024. That’s a 46% increase over 2023. The growth has been driven by word of mouth, according to Program Director Taylor Casamassima. Attendees have found the program helpful and they’re encouraging others who are struggling to attend.

PROS participants take classes to learn healthy habits and life skills so they can manage their symptoms, take care of themselves and gain employment. One class, Peer Academy, trains participants to help others facing mental illness. After completing a certification, they can be hired by organizations like Unity House. Participants in another class launched a new community event – the Mental Health Awareness Month walk in May – which attracted more than 40 people. This year’s walk is set for May 30. For information about joining the walk, visit our website, www.unityhouse.org.



2022 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Unity House successfully completed its 2022-2024 Strategic Plan in December 2024. Below are the key priorities achieved.

STAFFING

Goal: Unity House is an employer of choice in the communities we serve

- Explore strategies to effectively communicate the comprehensive total staff rewards package offered at Unity House
- Promote tuition reimbursement
- Explore and enhance how we train staff
- Create a “train the trainer” program for managers
- Establish relationships with local schools/colleges as a pipeline for new staff
- Enhance recruitment advertising

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Goal: Ensure business continuance, sustainability and disaster recovery

- Form a tech savvy committee
- Identify, prioritize and plan for the recommendations from the risk assessment
- Use technology to streamline functions in the support departments and programs
- Develop a 5-year technology plan
- Maximize the use of existing platforms

QUALITY SERVICES

Goal: Create a process to ensure high-quality, relevant services

- Redesign PROS curriculum and expand class schedule
- Maximize independent housing stipends
- Reimagine day services
- Maximize ACCES-VR contract and/or SEMP funding
- Enhance OASAS programs

ENDOWMENT

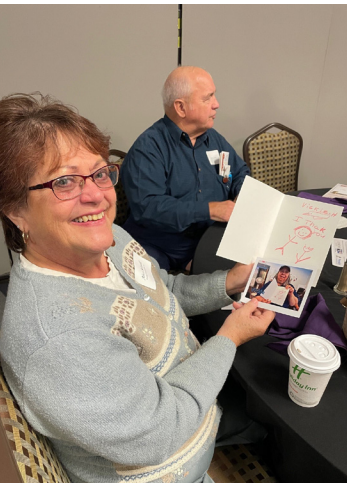
Goal: Grow the endowment to seven figures

- Establish a Planned Giving Advisory Council
- Create and launch a Legacy Giving Society
- Begin planning for a comprehensive campaign
- Restructure the Development and Marketing department

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

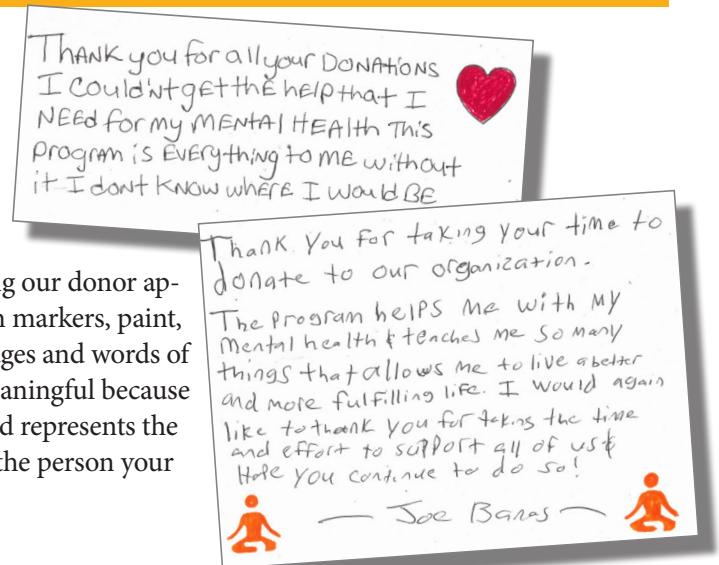
Goal: Unity House offers a premier Wellness Plan for its employees

- Evaluate the existing Wellness Plan for pros and cons
- Survey staff on the existing Wellness Plan; gain input for improvement
- Continue to collaborate with consultant to explore new wellness initiatives
- Conduct a satisfaction survey of staff in the third year of the plan



Forever Grateful

As a Unity House donor, you enhance the lives of people with disabilities. To show their appreciation, dozens of the people Unity House supports created handmade thank you cards, which were delivered during our donor appreciation breakfast in October. Crafted with markers, paint, and other media and filled with colorful images and words of gratitude, the cards show that each gift is meaningful because it improves the life of a real person. Each card represents the handshake or hug you would get if you met the person your gift helped. Thank you for all you do!



Monthly Giving = Consistent Support by Scott Diego

A couple of years ago, I decided to make a monthly donation to Unity House because I believe in the organization's mission to support those with special needs, like my uncle. I wanted to make a tangible difference, and knew that by committing to a regular gift, I could help provide the reliable, consistent support that Unity House needs in order to provide services and programming for those with disabilities.

For anyone considering it, I highly recommend starting a monthly donation. It's an effortless way to show continuous support and have a lasting impact; it's something I'm proud to be a part of.

Scott's right! It's easy to set up your recurring contribution on our website: unityhouse.org/donate/ Just click on “Monthly,” enter your info, and done!



Scott Diego

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS 2024

Every day, Unity House empowers people facing major life challenges. That critical work would have been impossible without our growing community of support. Thanks to their generosity, Unity House was able to direct nearly \$225,000 to meet the critical needs of people with disabilities. Thanks to local governmental leaders, we also received pledges of more than \$675,000 to make major accessibility improvements at many of our homes and facilities. We are deeply grateful to each of our loyal friends listed below. **Chris Iven, Chief Advancement Officer**

ENDOWMENT FUND - \$20,311 IN 2024; \$557,722 FUND TOTAL AT YEAR-END

Gifts to the endowment fund are held in perpetuity and invested to sustain Unity House's mission for generations to come. Donors are invited to join the Legacy Circle by making a planned estate gift to the endowment. Donations made in memoriam at the time of death are automatically designated to the endowment unless otherwise directed by the donor.

Carol Baxter	Christine Farrell-LaPage	Michael Leaser	Susan Rocholl
Shirley Bazarnik	Charles and Helene Fausold	Deborah Lord	Claire Rusin
Elizabeth Bement and William Martin	Betty Festa	James Lysick	Nancy Rutz
Linda Bruno	Mary Alice Freeman	Andrew Martin	Mark and Vicki Schrimmer
Marjorie Callahan	Mary Anne Gauthier	Carol May	Selective Insurance Group
JoAnn Clune	Linda and Anthony Gero	Connie Murray	Karen Simpson
Col. Bigelow Lawrence Chapter, NSDAR	Good Shepherd Catholic Community	Linda Nestor	G & J Smith Charitable Trust ^{10#}
Karen Cronk	Anthony Graceffo	Bob Nicholson	Jean Smyth
Andrew Cuddy ^{*10}	Jessica Janssen [*]	Joan Parsnick	Margaret Sutton
Jeanne Del Favero	Mary Joseph	Carole Pettigrass	Joan Tadoll
Kristina Edmonds	Mark and Jeannine Julian	Ron and Sara Jo Podolak	Suzanne Watson
Kathleen Erwin	Crystal Keogan	Dolores Pope	Nancy Westover
Patricia Erwin	Ken Knight ^{*10}	Thomas Potter	Stephen Wyckoff
	Joyce Kreydatus	James Purington	
		William Rejman	

It is our goal to provide a complete list of all donors who supported our mission in 2024. However, if your gift is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and contact the Development Office at development@unityhouse.org

* = Unity House board member
^ = Unity House employee
+ = Recurring donor
5 = 5-year donor
10 = 10-year donor
= Legacy Circle donor

FOUNDATIONS & GRANTMAKING ORGANIZATIONS – \$738,909

Community Foundation of Tompkins County	Assemblymember John Lemondes	Tompkins Charitable Fund
Dormitory Authority SNY	Senator Rachel May	Tompkins County Revitalization Fund
Fred L. Emerson Foundation	J.M. McDonald Foundation	Triad Foundation
D.E. French Foundation	Stanley W. Metcalf Foundation	

FRED ATKINS COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND – \$33,276 FUND TOTAL AT YEAR-END

Gary and Linda Coon	Jill and Mark Fandrich	Bonnie and Wayne Hoskins	Patricia Maguet
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PARTNER AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS

ACCES-VR	Medicaid	NYS Justice Center
Association for Community Living	New York Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation	NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
CNY Health Home	Nick's Ride 4 Friends	NYS Office of Addiction Services & Supports
County Community Services Boards	NYS Association of Day Service Providers	NYS Office of Mental Health
County Departments of Mental Health	NYS Department of Corrections & Community Supervision	NYS Problem Solving Courts
County Departments of Social Services	NYS Department of Education	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin.
East Hill Medical Center	NYS Department of Health	
HUD Continuum of Care		

Beardsley Architects + Engineers Golf Tournament Sponsors

Beardsley Architects hosted its 20th annual golf tournament at Highland Park Golf Club on August 19, 2024. For the second year in a row, proceeds benefited Unity House. We are deeply grateful to Beardsley, all the foursomes who played, and the following sponsors who helped raise \$12,942:

Adams Insurance	Cuddy Financial Services	Plan and Print Systems, Inc.
Auburn Community Hospital	Currier Plastics ¹⁰	The Printery
Beardsley Architects + Engineers	Ehrlich Pest Control	Quarry Ridge Winery
Boyle & Anderson, PC	Patricia Festa ^{*5}	Reagan Companies ¹⁰
Building Envelope Technologies Inc.	FLP Group/KinaneCo	Mark Rebich
Bush Crane, Inc.	Jacobs Press Inc.	Rich & Gardner Construction Co.
Carpet House Flooring	M.C. Townsend & Sons Construction	Scottie's Auto Detailing
Cayuga County Sheriff's Office	Maestro Music Therapy	Syracuse Blue Print Co.
Clean Start Systems	NUCOR Steel	Usherwood Office Technology
Dr. Steve Coleman	Pinnacle Investments, LLC	



HONOR ROLL OF DONORS 2024 *continued*

UNITY HOUSE ANNUAL FUND DONORS 2024

Anonymous (5) ^{^#5 10}	Contiguglia Law Offices	Janice Hoffmann ⁵	Thomas and Elaine Meyers	Scottie's Auto Detailing
Maxine Alberici ⁵	Gary and Linda Coon	Tracy Hollenbeck [^]	MG Architects ¹⁰	Margaret Shaw ⁺⁺
AllShifts	Michele Courtney	HR One Inc.	Jennifer Micale	Nancy Sheffield ¹⁰
Tom and Donna Ambrose ⁺	Sarah Coyle	Jeff Hube	Alan Midura and Spring Buck	Kirk Sigel and Beth Ahner
Amber Amidon ^{^+10}	Jim and Elena Crenner ¹⁰	Nicole Hube [^]	Alyssa Militello [^]	Armin Simpson
Abigale Anderson	Mary Crosley	Patricia Hube	David and Jill Miller	Mary Simpson ^{^+5}
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Kimberly Andrews	Jim Currier ⁵	InDeed Wellness	Victoria Miner ^{^+5}	Elizabeth Smith ^{^+10}
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Chris Arnold	Anthony Daddabbo	Chris and Emily Iven ^{^+}	Ashley Moench ¹⁰	Pat Smith ¹⁰
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Neil and Maggie Atkins ¹⁰	Polly Lyn Davies	Henry and Pat Iven	Brian Morsdorf	Bill and Karen Speck ⁵
Auburn Community Hospital	Robert and Michelle Delaney ⁵	John Jeffcoat	Cynthia Mott	Scott Spooner
Auburn Public Theater	Kerry Demarest ⁺	Johnston Paper	Ronald Moyer	Rep. Albert Stirpe Jr.
Vincent Ballistrea	Cindy Denardo	Jonathan's Furniture	Mutual of America	Martiel Stoecker ⁵
Megan Baran [^]	Scott Diego ⁺	Dawn Jordan	Janet Corey Naab	Donna Stowe ^{+10#}
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David and Beth Bowman ¹⁰	Marcia Herrling Finch	Tim and Susan Larkin ⁵	James Podolak	Allan VanDeMark
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Lucille Cannata	Michael Gallagher	M.C. Townsend & Sons	Mary K Redmond ⁵	Kenneth White
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Rocco Carbone	Deborah Geer	Nikki Malo	Suzanne Roberts	Brenda Wiemann
Tim Carr - Pinnacle Investments ⁵	Tony and Linda Gero	Ashley Manning [^]	Cynthia Rooker	Tina Wilcox ⁺
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CFCU	Wendy and Marty Goldman	Deb Martin	Richard and Joan Rusinko	Kristen Wilmot
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Bradley Chapman ^{*10}	David Gould ⁵	Barbara Marvin	Christopher Ryan ^{*10}	Xylem, Inc. ⁵
Jill Chayka	Diana Green	Nancy Massicci	Gary and Patricia Ryder	Caleb Young
Chemung Canal Trust Co.	Lisa Green	Gregory McConnell	David Salico	Clark and Nancy Young
Maureen Cheney	Tony and Patti Gucciardi ⁵	Craig McDonough	Amy Santobianco ^{^+10}	Hannah Young ^{^5}
Roberta Chiesa	John Hamm	Lisa McKeel	Patrick and Wendy Sargent	
Audrey Clark	Cherie Harmon	Michael McKeon	Diane Saxton	
CleanTec	Patricia Harris	Amanda McManus [^]	Elizabeth Scheibel	
JoAnn Clune	George Hassan	MEDENT/Community	Brian and Dee Dee Schenck	
CNYCentral	Haun Welding Supply	Computer ¹⁰	Andrew Schmidt	
Jay Cohen	George and Carolyn Hiza ^{10#}	Hsien-Ann Meng ⁵	Daniel Schultz	
Kathleen Connelly	Annie Hoff	Karen Merritt ⁵	Fred and Deb Schwarting ⁵	

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+ = Recurring donor
5 = 5-year donor
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IN MEMORIAM / IN HONOR

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Sue Phillips-Coe⁵
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Joanne Todd
in honor of Elspeth Peterson

Carol Vanetti¹⁰
in honor of Timothy Vanetti

Jim and Peggy Vivenzio¹⁰
in honor of Jamie Vivenzio

* = Unity House board member
^ = Unity House employee
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= Legacy Circle donor

Leaving a Legacy

My son, Nick Reiter, first arrived at Unity House in 1999, shortly before his 21st birthday. He joined a supportive housing program in Dryden for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Prior to this, I searched for something comparable that was closer to my home in Virginia. Sadly, the reality is that quality residential programs suitable to my son's needs are scarce.

As I was leaving after my first visit, soon after Nick's arrival, he told me he was homesick and sad. It was heartbreaking for both of us. But I knew Unity House was an excellent placement for him and that he would adjust with time, and he did. He grew more independent, involved in his community and much happier. He started volunteering at Cayuga Medical Center, and held a job at Burger King.

Since then, he has grown in maturity and independence as he strives to reach his potential. The core reason Nick is able to do this is because of Unity House. The combination of the programs developed within Unity House, the staff that support

these individuals, and the openness of communication to parents and family make Unity House a unique and life-saving organization for so many families.

For me, it's never been a question that I would include Unity House in my estate planning. I want Nick to continue to be supported and watched over when I am unable to do so, and I want this for others as well.

Legacy gifts, such as the bequest in my will for Unity House, become part of Unity House's endowment fund. Through careful investment, such gifts provide financial support for Unity House's mission for generations to come. This assures that Nick's needs continue to be met throughout his lifetime, as well as providing the programming that meets the needs of others in the future.

There is no more meaningful way for me to show my appreciation for all that Unity House has done than to help ensure others have the same opportunities as Nick.



Donna and Nick Stowe

Unity House's Legacy Circle honors those who have included Unity House in their estate plans. To learn more, contact Chris Iven at chris.iven@unityhouse.org or 315-253-6227 ext. 360.



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