

New Year's Resolutions

Almost everyone makes a New Year's resolution to commit to do something different. Perhaps it is to eat healthier, or exercise, maybe it's saving money. We do this because we want to improve ourselves and get ahead.

Our clients make resolutions all the time. Their challenge, much like ours, is the overwhelming process to achieve it.

When a client enters Mercy's residential program, they meet with a Case Manager to set goals and a plan is created in the form of their very own "Curriculum for Life."

When we redesigned some of our programs this past year we wanted to provide each client with the tools they would need to be successful on their own. This "curriculum" consists of workshops that address the practical, personal, and urgent needs of our clients. In addition to these workshops, we have partnered with Toivo, by Advocacy Unlimited to lead additional workshops and classes three times a week and Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) to offer recovery support groups.

Toivo is a nonprofit organization that offers holistic classes based on the belief that no one should be denied the benefits of Yoga, meditation or other types of classes based on socioeconomic standing, psychiatric history and/or experiences with addiction.

In addition to Yoga, Toivo offers our clients classes on meditation, fitness and strength training, creative writing, expressive art, nutrition workshops, and drum circles. Our life skills workshops will offer classes that address many areas including: communication, time management, stress

management, problem solving, social skills, recovery tools, job interviewing skills, landlord/tenant relationships and budgeting.

A few of the workshops we offer are:

Coffee Talk: *teaching communication skills, communication styles, and body language.*

99 Problems and How to Solve One: *goal setting, decision making, needs vs. wants, practicing to meet the needs, where to go for support.*

Activities for Daily Living: *proper nutrition, dietary goal setting, intro and benefits to exercise, effects of drugs and alcohol.*

Do You Hear Me Now? Developing social skills, first impressions, starting a conversation, building self esteem and self awareness, giving and receiving feedback, and healthy relationships.



Mercy Housing and Shelter has partnered with Toivo by Advocacy Unlimited to provide workshops and classes focused on nourishing the mind and body, and CCAR—Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery to lead recovery groups.

Charitable Gifts through your IRA

The IRA Charitable Rollover has been extended permanently. What this means is individuals age 70½ and older can donate directly from their IRAs to Mercy Housing and Shelter. One of the key benefits of a direct charitable contribution from an IRA is that the distribution counts towards your Required Minimum Distribution. This allows you to transfer money from your IRA directly to Mercy, without having to recognize the transfer as taxable income. Donors should consult their tax advisors about their specific situations.

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We're Social! Follow Us!

Stories from Mercy By Colleen Corriveau, Director of Fund Development

We strive to share stories with you of our clients to demonstrate who we are helping. Most of the time, clients do not want their photo taken and I respect that. When I speak with a client, if they are willing to share their story, they tell me they are not proud of where their lives or choices have taken them. The last thing we want to do is to take away their dignity by asking them to be in a photo if they are not comfortable, which in most cases they are not.

At an all staff meeting a few years ago a speaker talked to us about the "position of power" we, the staff at Mercy Housing and Shelter, hold. People are coming to us needing basic human needs such as food, clothing, showers, or a bed. We are in a position to provide these things and we do everything we can to do this. But we also have to remember that most have had boundaries violated many times in their lives and they are extremely vulnerable. We need to respect our position and always show compassion and respect.

I am proud of the work our staff provides to the individuals and families walking through our doors. Our Case Managers give all they have to help someone reach their goals, and ultimately a home of their own. But sometimes we cannot help everyone and they may leave, or be discharged to another program that can better serve their needs. And sadly, some leave us having been swallowed up by the pain they were trying to escape. Recently we lost a client and it was a shock to the staff and residents. This client had only been with us a few months but she had left her mark throughout the building. Her artwork and inspirational sayings adorn many of the walls, resident's rooms, and even our staff's desks. If you were walking through the building late at night, you might catch her playing the piano in the community room. She was a talented young woman who was also a published writer. The staff said she would get into her "zone" and disappear to her room to create more artwork, only to be revealed on a wall somewhere in the building the next morning.

When I was introduced to her a few weeks ago I asked her about writing something to share with you. We talked about what I was looking for in terms of a message. She wanted me to hear a poem she had written and recorded herself reciting. I listened intently and became choked up hearing her pain, a pain many of us have had in our lifetimes, but one so deep you could see how it had affected her life. She did write something for me to share about three weeks ago. We debated about publishing it out of respect for her, but she had eagerly agreed to write this and we think her words are important to share with you. The following are her words:

"Trust in the Process"

"Trust in the process" she said, and so I did. 118 Main Street it is then.

At first glance the child in me wanted to drop my bags and run under my mother's dress. I was walking down the side walk on the side of a newly renovated building with my bags in hand. I was walking not feeling the ground beneath my feet. "Every uncomfortable feeling is you stretching, growing, and changing" she said. Ms. Althea's voice was amplified in my head. Ms Althea was my Angel in human form from my previous program. (my counselor). I can't wait to see what I change into because this is very uncomfortable. Every alarm system in my body was going off at once. Male energy was everywhere. It was a warm and sunny day. There were people moving so fast everywhere in every direction.

I took a deep breath, worked through my issues, and got settled with my things in a small but adequate room on the 2nd floor. The hallways were long and quiet. Most people were out and about. Night time came quick and as everyone slept I wandered around. Night time is my favorite time. There is not that much stimulation. The world is much more still. "Pay attention" now my mother is ringing in my head. "Close ur eyes and feel with ur instinct, You will get signs and feelings. That is your soul guiding you and it will never steer you wrong"...

She is always right. I walked through a stair case/hallway into a room I never expected to be tucked away in here. It was beautiful. A chapel. I immediately looked up and saw a beautiful stained glass window with the Virgin Mary's garden scene. It took my breath away. (1st sign). Directly below presented what I felt like was just for me was a piano (2nd sign). The last sign was a feeling. I was in the right place. The vibe within the walls of that chapel were all good. I imagined all of the people who may have prayed here with good intention. It got even more confirming for me when I ended up outside at night in the back court yard to chat with a woman I met at another program. I was distracted by someone quickly walking thru the fence to my left. It was a priest! I ran over to the fence and thru it I asked, "Father can u bless me" and he did.

Time had stopped for me again and has given me another chance to learn. To change. To grow. Everything that I need to begin a new life I have here in this building that I am in. A bunch of humans doing human things. Helping, being kind, and showing love. (Staff) / A bunch of wounded, yet strong people, trying to change and find a way to live, (peers) "We are all broken, that is how the light gets in".

