



**Always Home** | PREVENTING  
FAMILY  
HOMELESSNESS  
*Serving Communities Since 1998*

## January 2025 E-Newsletter



Rising rent prices, a shortage of affordable housing units, and increasing competition for available apartments are ongoing challenges that force low-income families into situations of housing insecurity. Many families who allocate over 30% of their income towards rent have a high housing cost-burden and are struggling to stay housed.

"Diane" is a single mother raising two daughters. To support her family, she juggles two jobs. From Monday through Friday, she works at a local daycare center. On weekends, she serves as a part-time caregiver for a disabled adult. Typically, with the two jobs, she manages to cover her rent and other bills. However, there was a brief period when she had to take time off work to care for her own mother, which left her short on funds to pay the rent and other monthly expenses. She called Always Home seeking assistance.

Always Home's Social Worker, Marlynn Benker, worked closely with "Diane" to assess her income and expenses. Together, they created a budget plan that ensured "Diane" could meet her financial obligations, while also setting aside a small amount in savings for a future emergency. It was agreed that Always Home would pay the past-due rent knowing that "Diane" would be able to maintain her housing stability after our intervention.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to our annual appeal. Your generosity fuels our programs and services, enabling us to provide essential resources, guidance, and hope to "Diane" and client families like her. With your support, 'Preventing Family Homelessness' is possible.

# Always Home Staff Update



We're excited to introduce you to **Gabriella Trudelle** who recently joined us as Case Worker/Shelter Diversion Specialist. Always Home serves as a designated Family HUB for the 2-1-1-Eastern Coordinated Access Network (ECAN), a vital role within Connecticut's homeless response system. Gabriella is the Always Home staff member who offers case management services to families who are determined by 2-1-1 to be homeless or within 14 days of homelessness. With a bachelor's degree in Psychological Science, Gabriella represents the compassionate support system families need during their time of crisis. She shares, "I am so excited to be joining the amazing Always Home team and I look forward to using my skills to help the community."



Hello's are often followed by goodbyes. Today, we bid farewell to **Trisha Dani**, a cherished member of Always Home for the past eleven years. What began as a summer internship evolved into a full-time position as we soon recognized Trisha's intelligence, dedication, and steady demeanor. During her time with Always Home, Trisha earned her BA in Human Development and Family Studies, an MS in Marriage and Family Therapy, and a Graduate Certificate in Systemic Couple and Family Therapy. This education equipped her with the practical skills required for her position as a Case Worker/Shelter Diversion Specialist, where she assisted families in exploring options other than emergency shelter. Trisha also cared deeply, helping hundreds of families navigate their housing emergency with both patience and understanding. As Trisha steps down to spend more time with her two-year old son, we wish her all the best in this new chapter of her life.



Reserve your seat at Always Home's annual Heart to Heart Gala, a celebration of our community's commitment to Preventing Family Homelessness. The Gala Committee is excited to share that we are fortunate to have two Heart of Gold sponsors this year: [The Whaler's Inn](#) and [Pathview Wealth](#). We are deeply grateful for their support of the gala and our mission, 'Preventing Family Homelessness'. To purchase tickets and access all the information for the evening, [click here](#). *Special thanks to Michelle Marra whose vibrant artwork inspired this year's invitation!*

THE  
WHALER'S  
INN



MYSTIC, CT

  
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A heartfelt thank you to our friends at The Whaler's Inn and The Shipwright's Daughter for sharing the joy of the holiday season with Always Home. Generous donations from visits with Santa, along with proceeds from their annual holiday party, truly made a difference in the lives of families struggling to stay housed. We appreciate both the staff and the management's amazing community spirit and kindness. Always Home was also honored to be one of five Connecticut nonprofits featured in the first year of the Light the World Giving Machines in Mystic. The most-donated item to Always Home was a surprise holiday gift for a child. Knowing that the community is committed to ensuring that every child receives a present during the holiday season touched our hearts. Finally, we thank members of the Mystic Lions Club and others who, with contributed gifts, gift cards, and overflowing food baskets, spread holiday cheer to so many of our client families.

Shake off your winter blues at this family-favorite community event in support of Always Home! Sample local restaurants' chowders and cast a vote for your favorite! Shout out to the Olde Mistick Village Merchants Association and event sponsors, [Charter Oak Credit Union](#) and [R.B. Kent & Son, Inc.](#), for making this day possible. Volunteers needed for different shifts throughout the day. Sign up by [clicking here!](#)



## Grateful for Grants!

Grants play a crucial role in funding for Always Home. We are deeply grateful for recent contributions from the following supporters: Charter Oak Credit Union Community Giving Grants Program; Chelsea Groton Foundation; Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut's Women & Girls Fund; Constellation Energy Community Champions; Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation; The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation; Elsie A. Brown Fund, Inc.; The Marra Family Fund; Olga Sipolin Children's Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Co-Trustee; Ring's End; Rotary of the Stoningtons; Seedworks Fund; and Town Fair Tire Foundation, Inc.