



IPH partners with Albany Medical College on therapeutic art program for guests

Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless and Albany Medical College have formed a unique partnership to offer individuals experiencing homelessness a creative outlet to express their feelings through artwork.

The Empowering Arts program is a series of bi-weekly art workshops hosted by Albany Medical College students at IPH's Community Connections daytime drop-in center. During the sessions, individuals experiencing homelessness have the opportunity to explore various artistic mediums, such as watercolor painting, dance and jewelry making.

Designed to support creative expression, community participation, stress reduction and self-esteem amongst IPH guests,

the program also provides Albany Medical College students with a greater understanding of homelessness.

"Art is an empowering and engaging medium, especially for our most vulnerable community members," said IPH Executive Director Janine Robitaille. "Studies have shown that arts programming can help individuals who are homeless explore their feelings, improve their mental health and engage with their community. We thank Albany Medical College for their support in bringing this truly impactful program to our guests."

The Empowering Arts program is part of Albany Medical College's service learning curriculum, which exposes students to the...

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IPH Guest Chris draws a picture based on album artwork during the Empowering Arts workshop on February 18, 2022.

Former Safe Haven guest embraces new role as IPH staff member

After years of living on the streets without finding success in the shelter system, Jazz arrived at IPH's Code Blue Emergency Shelter Safe Haven after coming to a stark and sudden realization.

"I was homeless. I was sleeping in the park and abandoned buildings," said Jazz. "I realized I wasn't getting anywhere. And then someone told me about this place. I came here the next day and I've been here since."

He recalls feeling immediately welcomed by the staff at Safe Haven, who invited him in "with open arms" and gave him the resources he needed to begin rebuilding his life.

Safe Haven became the closest thing Jazz had to home for months. Each night, he returned to the shelter for not only a warm meal and a comfortable bed, but for the support he received from IPH's staff.

With the encouragement of the staff at Safe Haven, Jazz began to set goals for himself. He volunteered to help clean. He felt like he was finally getting the resources he needed to succeed.

A few months after arriving at Safe Haven, Jazz accomplished one of those goals: he moved into his own apartment with the help of IPH. He has maintained that same safe and secure housing for years since.

"I came from zero to 100. It made me feel so happy to have my key. When I moved in

here, I had nothing. And then I had a brand-new bed and furniture. It all came from IPH," said Jazz.

Even though he had his own home, Jazz continued to feel a strong connection to IPH and began working at Safe Haven as a seasonal employee. He has since become a fixture of the emergency shelter.

Jazz hopes to take his work one step further. He wants to go back to school to study social work and become a counselor. He wants to share his experiences with others.

"I want to get people off the streets. I want to take them places and help them. Give them the resources that get you back on your feet," he said.



Former IPH guest Jazz stands outside his workplace Safe Haven in Albany.

He calls the Safe Haven staff who helped him accomplish those same objectives his idols.

"I thank them every morning. I'm good because of them," he said.

A New View on Sheridan Avenue



We're growing! Stay tuned for more details about how IPH is continuing to meet the demand for more affordable housing units in Albany's Sheridan Hollow neighborhood.

Empowering Arts program continued...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

challenges facing underserved populations while strengthening their compassion and commitment to improving the health of their community.

"Empowering Arts was born out of a desire to help serve our community and promote medical student involvement with and understanding of homelessness in Albany," said Albany Medical College student Shivali Gupta, who serves on the Empowering Arts leadership committee. "It has been a wonderful experience working with IPH to grow this program and learn the best ways to use art as a form of expression and community building."

The Empowering Arts program is one of numerous enrichment activities and educational opportunities offered by IPH's Community Connections program.

The Community Connections program at IPH provides homeless individuals and low-income families with no-cost access to vital resources, including hot meals, food, clothing, laundry, showers, lockers, mailboxes, case management and housing assistance, as well as enrichment programs and activities. The program served approximately 1,000 guests in 2021.



IPH Guest Kattie displays the watercolor painting she created during the Empowering Arts workshop on February 18, 2022.

A New Way to Support IPH: Introducing the Giving Catalog

For the past 15 years, spring has ushered in the return of the annual A Taste of Albany culinary showcase, a key fundraiser for IPH's programs and services.

It's no secret that the pandemic has created new challenges and shifted norms. For this reason, we have made the difficult decision not to host A Taste of Albany in 2022. We very much appreciate the incredible support you've shown this event over the years and hope you'll continue to

Giving CATALOG SPRING 2022

join us as we launch an exciting new initiative this spring.

Presented by Hoffman Car Wash and SEFCU, the IPH Giving Catalog is an interactive fundraiser showcasing the positive impact

that IPH's shelter, community and housing programs have on individuals and families in need.

The online platform invites supporters to browse and symbolically "purchase" items that

relate to IPH programs, such as a night of shelter; nutritious meals; or housing welcome kits. The assigned "price" for each item will equate to a financial gift to IPH.

Launching in May, the Giving Catalog will raise critical funding for the thousands of homeless individuals and low-income families we serve each year.

We look forward to sharing more information about this new way to support our programs soon!

Honoring a Legacy by Continuing Her Work: The Ms. Tina Fund

In early 2021, the IPH family experienced a tragic loss when beloved case manager Waltenia “Ms. Tina” Taylor unexpectedly passed away.

“She was amazing,” said Shahmeeka Chaney-Artis, who worked alongside Ms. Tina. “She didn’t give up. Her door was always open. She made people feel seen and heard.”

In her work as a case manager, Ms. Tina cared deeply about connecting IPH guests with critical resources, including identification. Many individuals experiencing homelessness come to IPH without ID or the money needed to obtain a new one. Applying for a home, job or bank account all require ID.

Ms. Tina frequently helped guests overcome this obstacle, swiftly and efficiently navigating complex systems and seeking out resources to secure a new ID or birth certificate.

“She would go above and beyond for everybody. She was big on helping people,” said Chaney-Artis, who would watch Ms. Tina in action. She saw how Ms. Tina interacted with guests and made them feel instantly welcome.

Shortly after her passing, IPH established the Waltenia “Ms. Tina” Taylor Memorial Fund, which is dedicated to obtaining birth certificates and identification for guests who do not have copies of these critical documents.

Former IPH staff member Wayne Cochran, who worked with Ms. Tina at Safe Haven, made the donation that kicked off the Fund.

“It’s important to make things easier for people to get the resources they need to succeed. If I can knock down some of these barriers, I want to do that,” said Cochran. “I think Ms. Tina would feel great about it.”



Ms. Tina frequently worked with IPH guests to help them secure new identification or birth certificates.

The Ms. Tina Fund has helped numerous individuals secure new identification, including IPH guest Steve, who did not have his ID for about a year.

“I’m thankful for having it. Housing, medication, all these things need ID,” said Steve.

Chaney-Artis believes that Ms. Tina would be thrilled that IPH is carrying on this important work in her name. “Honoring her in this way is us telling her we have it from here, we’re going to keep this going,” she said.



IPH staff members stand in front of a bulletin board dedicated to Ms. Tina at the Safe Haven seasonal overnight shelter.

How to Support the Ms. Tina Fund

Your gift of \$50 will cover the cost of a new ID for an individual experiencing homelessness – empowering their self-worth and paving the way to stability.

Visit www.iphny.org and note Ms. Tina Fund when making your donation.



What is Key Club?

The Key Club is our monthly giving program - a committed group of givers whose monthly donation ensures those experiencing or facing homelessness in our neighborhoods have consistent access to basic needs resources.

As a member of Key Club...

Your support is impactful - and goes to work immediately so the individuals and families that rely on our services can find success and stability all year long.

Your giving is sustainable - and provides IPH with predictable income, allowing us to plan for the future.

Your commitment is part of a community - and together, monthly givers represent a mighty force for good that allows the mission of IPH to grow and reach all who depend on it.

You're Going to Fit Right In!

We need to add 22 monthly donors to the Club before the end of 2022

Become a member today at www.iphny.org/KeyClub

Meet Key Club member Jamie Stacy



Why are you a monthly donor?

When I was a volunteer and staff member at IPH, I witnessed the incredible, life-changing services that IPH provides. The staff puts 100 percent into their work. IPH has a very special place in my heart. I wanted to stay connected to IPH.

What aspect of IPH's programming do you feel most connected to?

I feel really connected to the clients. As a staff member, I got to know the families in the neighborhood. IPH is making a difference and providing stability right down to each individual they serve.

What do you enjoy about being a monthly donor?

I love knowing I'm still a part of IPH. In my opinion, the best thing anyone can do (for a nonprofit) is to make their giving consistent. By donating a little each month, I don't feel it in my budget, but I know I've donated hundreds over time. It's more manageable and has a larger impact.

What would you tell others who are considering becoming a monthly donor?

You've already connected to the mission and understand the value that IPH provides to individuals in need. And now the biggest way you can support IPH is to consistently give over time. Nonprofits need some level of predictability. Monthly giving allows IPH to forecast their budget and plan for the future. Monthly giving is the best way to support nonprofits like IPH.

INSIDE IPH

Restaurant Resiliency Program provides 5,600 meals for IPH guests



In winter 2022, IPH was a beneficiary of New York's Restaurant Resiliency Program in partnership with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York.

For six weeks, Sapoara Restaurant generously donated a total of 5,600 nutritious and delicious meals for guests experiencing or facing homelessness.

The Restaurant Resiliency Program provides food banks with the funding to source meals from restaurants for emergency feeding programs, such as our shelters. IPH is proud to be a part of this initiative, which addresses the dual challenges of restaurants struggling to stay afloat and soaring rates of food insecurity due to the economic fallout of the pandemic.

IPH offers keynote address during Poverty Awareness Panel

IPH Program Director Rebecca Ciullo served as the keynote speaker during a panel discussion on Poverty Awareness and Healthcare Implications, hosted by the Office of Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Albany Med in honor of Poverty Awareness Month on Thursday, January 27.

During the address, Rebecca educated the audience about the issues impacting low-income individuals and families in the Capital Region, as well as the programs and resources IPH offers to support community members in need.

In addition to IPH, the panel featured community leaders from the Homeless and Travelers' Aid Society; Christ's Church Albany; and Street Soldiers.



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Opening Doors Every Day

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