

Hoosick Falls & Surrounding Areas News

Unity House Opens Services Center In Hoosick Falls Armory

With the realization the police department was fielding an average of 20 domestic violence calls a month, Hoosick Falls Chief Bob Ashe believed there needed to be services that were closer to home for these victims. He reached out to Unity House Domestic Violence Services staff.

"For some residents of these rural areas, getting to Troy where Unity House's domestic violence services program already exists is just too much to navigate," said Ashe. Many lack transportation and there is no cab service and limited public transportation here, and that's a real barrier for victims who need help."

"I knew that Unity House had the expertise to help our residents and as I expected the DV services staff were eager to work with us to get this center opened," Ashe said.

Unity House offers crisis intervention, information and referrals to other related community programs. Case managers work with victims to assess their needs and provide safety planning based on each individual's needs. Unity House also has an extensive youth program that offers counseling and case management to youth experiencing domestic, dating or family violence.

Sarah McGaughnea, Unity House's director of community engagement for DV services, said the team is working to determine what the community

needs and will likely bring additional services to the center.

"The residents of these communities often need assistance with food and clothing, and even housing, and we hope that they will come to understand that help is available at this center," said McGaughnea. "We want to get them what they need, including referrals to other programs that can help."

The Hoosick Falls center will be staffed by Unity House DV Services team members Monday through Friday from 10 am to 4 pm. Hoosick Rising, a non-profit organization focusing on economic development that works with businesses, citizens, organization, and local government to enhance the greater Hoosick community, owns the Hoosick Falls Armory and is providing the space and utilities to Unity House at no cost. Town offices are located in the building, which will help ensure anonymity for those who enter

the building to seek services.

In addition to Hoosick Falls residents, it is expected that residents of Stephentown, Petersburg, Berlin, Grafton, and Pittstown will access the services offered at the center.



Hoosick Falls Police Chief Bob Ashe, at the podium, speaks to people gathered to celebrate the opening of the Unity House at 80 Church Street to provide domestic violence services to the area. The police department receives an average of 20 domestic violence calls a month. Joining Ashe are (L to R) Unity House Director of Domestic Services Tabitha Dunn, Director of Community Engagement for DV Services Sarah McGaughnea and Rensselaer County District Attorney Mary Donahue. Photo by Steve Bradley.

HOOSICK

Following All The Protocols

by Bea Peterson

All of us have been dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. Obviously it's a worldwide problem. Locally the area has dealt with epidemic highs and lows. Schools and businesses opened and closed. We masked, we isolated, we did whatever it took to keep ourselves, our families and our community well. Keeping in touch with family has certainly been difficult. Thank goodness for Zoom and other media sources that have allowed us to see our families and teachers.

If, however, you are one of the 190 plus students attending Hoosac School or living at the International Sport Academy on High Street, the problem is multiplied. These students come from 15 states and 29 countries. Some students, for example, from China and Brazil were in this country and couldn't get back to their homes. While others were in China and Brazil and

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Hoosac School students Wisdom Afrani from Ghana, West Africa and Gabriela Palladini-Macedo from Brazil, teacher Ricardo Canto-Pereira, also from Brazil and Headmaster Dean Foster. Photo by Bea Peterson.

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Bruce Patire
518-390-9726

Jeff Wysocki
518-944-3857

County Office: 518-270-2850
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