

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wallingford Seasonal Emergency Shelter to Reopen February 24th Through Collaborative Community Effort

Wallingford, CT – The Wallingford Seasonal Emergency Shelter will reopen on **Monday, February 24**, after a temporary closure due to a 10% reduction in the State Cold Weather Budget, thanks to the swift action and collaboration of community partners.

Upon learning about the shelter's closure, local organizations and supporters came together to develop a funding strategy to resume operations. **Columbus House** submitted a proposed budget of **\$27,000** to staff and operate the shelter for six weeks. The Town of Wallingford quickly stepped up, with the **Mayor's Office allocating \$2,000** from the Emergency Management fund and, **upon request of the mayor, the Town Council approving an additional \$12,000**. Private donors also played a key role, with **The Regan Foundation contributing \$10,000** and **Burns & McDonnell providing \$3,000**.

The **United Way of Meriden and Wallingford** is proud to support **Columbus House** in coordinating this crucial effort and continues to work alongside the **Regan Foundation and Burns & McDonnell** to ensure that the shelter remains well-stocked with essential supplies, including cleaning products, personal care items, clothing, and meals.

"The reopening of the Wallingford Seasonal Emergency Shelter is a testament to what can be achieved when local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations unite for the common good," said **Maria Campos Harlow, Executive Director of United Way of Meriden and Wallingford**. "This is truly Wallingford at its best."

The shelter will be open daily from 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM until the morning of April 6. During the day, individuals can use the **Wallingford Family YMCA as a warming center**, offering a safe and warm space.

While the shelter is currently funded to remain open for six weeks, **our goal is to extend operations for the duration of the cold weather. Additional funding will be necessary to achieve this**. Community members, businesses, and organizations interested in contributing to this effort are encouraged to reach out.

Community members interested in supporting this effort, whether through donations or volunteering, are encouraged to contact **United Way of Meriden and Wallingford at (203) 235-4403**.

This initiative showcases the power of public and private partnerships in addressing urgent community needs and ensuring that vulnerable individuals have a place to turn during the winter months.

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