

YWCA IS ON A MISSION



For Immediate Release

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YWCA NorthEastern NY Realizes Dream of Owning an Empowerment, Wellness, and Recovery Center for Domestic Violence Survivors A Space for Healing, Safety, and Creating a New Life

Schenectady, New York, May 18, 2022 — On Tuesday, YWCA NorthEastern NY realized their dream of closing on the purchase of a new domestic violence shelter with the help of Schenectady County, MVP Healthcare, Northern Rivers, and numerous anonymous community donors. The new building will be called YWCA NENY's Empowerment, Healing, & Wellness Center.

YWCA NENY's Shelter Coordinator, Melissa Sherling said, "YWCA NENY's new domestic violence shelter will be a welcome respite to the people we serve on a daily basis. The new facility offers twice as much space as we currently have and private bedrooms. This will allow us to offer more resources and an even stronger feeling of safety for survivors and their families as they begin healing from trauma."

"The YWCA provides vital services for members of our community at a time when they need it the most," **said Anthony Jasenski, Chair of the Schenectady County Legislature.** "The County Legislature is proud to invest \$150,000 in their new shelter, which will allow the YWCA to expand services and continue supporting and empowering those who seek their help."

The new location will nearly double the space available from the previous shelter. This includes 13 single private bedrooms for domestic violence victims and two separate rooms for families. Due to limited space at the previous shelter, residents had to share living spaces. Now, survivors and their families will have their own private space to heal in a safe and secure location.

YWCA NENY will have the ability to offer on-site support services and a space for outside partners, like MVP Healthcare to provide additional aid and services to survivors. Residents and staff will have access to a commercial kitchen and dining area, outdoor green space, a meditation room, 15 team member workstations, and four community/meeting rooms. There will be a communal space for group sessions, family time, space to play, and a large multi-purpose recreational room with outdoor access. The outdoor space includes picnic tables and a play area. This location will provide survivors and YW staff with more security, offering a confidential and secure admissions office space, entryway, and cameras.

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YWCA NENY will offer a number of options to the community for supporting the opening of this new and vibrant space. Individuals, groups, and companies will be able to sponsor a resident room makeover at the new shelter to decorate prior to occupants moving in, as well as room/space naming opportunities. Rooms/community spaces can be named for an organization, in honor of an individual, or in memory of a cherished loved one.

For the safety of residents, the location of the YWCA NENY Empowerment, Healing, & Wellness Center is confidential. Survivors of domestic violence who need assistance can call the YWCA's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline at 518.374.3386 for support.

"We are beyond elated to now be the proud owners of a healing and wellness space for survivors and their families. This is a dream come true for YWCA NENY." **said Kim Siciliano, YWCA NENY CEO.** "We have been offering domestic violence services in the Schenectady community for well over 50 years, and this amazing space will help so many community members start over, breathe easier, and move forward with their lives. A huge thank you to all of our supporters who made this happen and to the many that will continue giving to this safe community space of healing and wellness."

"The domestic violence support services that YWCA NorthEastern New York offers are critical to our community," **said MVP Health Care's Vice President of Community Engagement, Ellen Sax.** "MVP is proud to support the new shelter and educational programming that will have an impact on many during a significant time of need. We applaud the YWCA for their unwavering dedication to empowering women and congratulate them on the opening of their new domestic violence shelter."

YWCA NorthEastern NY is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. YWCA NENY achieves this mission through comprehensive domestic violence support services, affordable housing, racial equality initiatives, and early learning education. Since 1976, YWCA NENY has worked to build a comprehensive domestic violence program and support services that include shelter, advocacy, counseling & support groups for victims and their children, education & referral, outreach programs, transitional housing, and economic empowerment. YWCA NENY's confidential domestic violence shelter provides a healing environment for individuals and families leaving dangerous situations.

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