

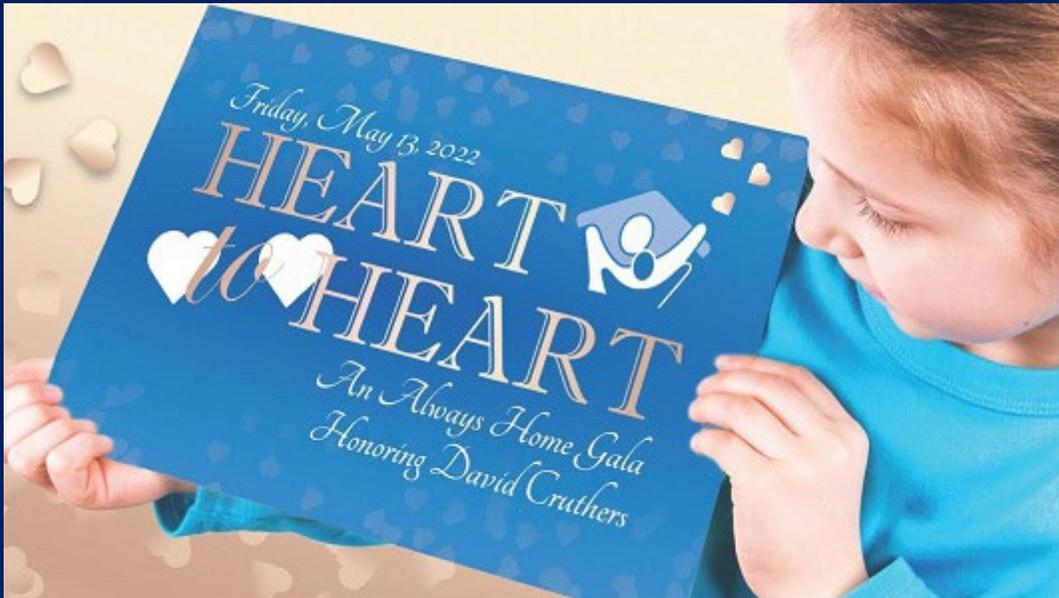


## **A Couple of Bartenders Walk Into ...**

Eight years ago, Marcella would never have imagined that her life would be what it is today. Back in September 2014, she and her daughter were on the precipice of homelessness. Marcella was earning money bartending, relying on a minimum wage salary plus tips. But the weekly income was inconsistent, and she had fallen behind on rent and was at risk of eviction. When Marcella reached out to Always Home, she was desperate for stability in her life. Always Home helped Marcella find a new apartment that fit her budget and secured the lease with the landlord by paying both the security deposit and first month's rent. For Marcella, the new apartment was the kick-start she needed to rekindle her confidence and the belief that she could do better.

Today, with hard work, grit and determination, Marcella is the proud co-owner of A Couple of Bartenders CT, a bar and beverage catering service. While working at a Clinton Art Society event this past Sunday, Marcella and her partner, Jeff, met world-famous Chef Jacques Pepin. Both Marcella and Jeff recalled that when they were growing up their parents and grandparents watched Chef Pepin on PBS. They spoke with him about his passion for cooking, family and his legacy work of The Jacques Pepin Foundation. Chef Pepin's foundation raises funds to support community kitchens that provide life skills and culinary training to adults with employment barriers because of prior homelessness, substance abuse, incarceration or a lack of skills, education or work history.

Marcella was excited to share with us that Chef Pepin has invited their business to provide drinks at an upcoming Summer fundraiser he hosts at his home in Madison to benefit his foundation. Along with great food and a game of boules, Chef Pepin's Summer soiree will include A Couple of Bartenders CT.



## LET'S HAVE A HEART TO HEART

Every day parents and children in our communities face homelessness. It may be someone you interacted with today - the cashier at the grocery store, the barista who poured your morning latte or the certified nursing assistant helping an elderly relative.

On Friday, May 13th, YOU can make a difference in a family's life. Our annual **HEART TO HEART** Gala at the Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa is a spirited gathering of friends, old and new, in support of our mission Preventing Family Homelessness. This year we're honoring David Cruthers, a former Board member, prior employee and longtime champion of Always Home.

***If you haven't received your invitation in the mail and RSVP'd, just click on the image above for Event Details and Tickets!***

Special Thanks to

THE WHALER'S INN



MYSTIC, CT

Heart of Gold Sponsor

**Melinda Elliott Carlisle**

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a world at play



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## KINSHIP CARE

When a family crisis threatened the safety of her granddaughter, Angela immediately stepped up to raise her. She knew she could provide the 9-year-old with love and stability. What she didn't consider were the financial and physical challenges of parenting. Angela is a former paralegal who worked for a well-known lawyer until medical disabilities ended her career. Today, she lives frugally on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Finding a new apartment was the first step to starting a new life with her granddaughter. But rents were high, inventory low and most places didn't accept pets. "I have had my dog for 11 years," said Angela, "since she was a baby and I would never give her up ever ever!" When Angela finally found a pet-friendly apartment,

despite having scrimped and saved, she didn't have enough money to secure the lease. "I saved money for the U-Haul and the movers which was hard," Angela explained. "If I had known about paying a prorated amount or the dog deposit I would've tried to save more." Frustrated and discouraged, Angela contacted Always Home.



Always Home's Social Worker, Marlynn Benker, who is also a grandmother and kindred animal lover, empathized with Angela's situation. Marlynn has a cat and dog of her own and recognizes that a beloved pet is an important family member. "Like Angela, I would never give up my pets," Marlynn shared. "Pets enhance comfort, health and well-being." Before she even got off the phone with Angela, Marlynn knew that Angela's housing stabilization plan would include a 7-pound pup named Princess.

Always Home helped Angela bridge the gap between her savings and what was needed to move in to a new apartment, including the required pet fee. Marlynn also worked with Angela to create a monthly budget and bolstered her housing stability by troubleshooting other issues. We paid additional rent which will free up resources for Angela, so she can catch up on car repair payments. We also assisted with the cost of summer camp so that Angela's granddaughter will have an enriching school break.

Raising a grandchild won't be easy, but Angela is grateful that Always Home was there for her at the start of her new journey.



## DON'T MISS THE REGATTA & MEGA PARTY OF THE YEAR!



**JULY 16, 2022**  
**RACE 10:55 AM / MEGAPARTY 5PM**

**CLICK ON THE  
IMAGE AT LEFT  
FOR REGATTA  
REGISTRATION  
AND MEGAPARTY  
TICKETS AND  
DETAILS!**

Whether you race in the Mudhead Benefit Cup Regatta or not...

Support Always Home & have a blast at the MegaPARTY  
at Mystic Shipyard!

Great food, full bar, live music from Woolly Mammoth & more...



## YOU MAKE US STRONGER

Over the past 9 months, Always Home has helped 212 families avoid the trauma of eviction, homelessness or time spent in emergency shelter. Your support makes our work possible. Special thanks to Kaiden Chandler and subscribers to his digital publication [Weekly Week](#). To date, over \$600 has been raised in support of Always Home's mission!

Program grants are critical to our ability to provide meaningful support to families in housing crisis. Since January 2022, we are honored to have received grants from: ***Berkshire Bank Foundation; Big Lots Foundation; Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; Connecticut Department of Housing Emergency Food and Shelter Program; Eastern Connecticut Association of REALTORS; People's United Community Foundation; and Rotary Club of Mystic.***

We are also grateful to municipalities who are committing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to meet critical social service needs. Always Home has applied for and received multi-year ARPA funding commitments from the **City of New London** and the **Town of Stonington**. The goal of both municipal grants is to move beyond the crisis intervention model. We will work with families on a more intensive level to overcome recurring barriers, create pathways to housing stability and improve overall well-being. We look forward to working alongside other social service providers to maximize our resources and impact.

## GRATITUDE TO OUR HEART TO HEART GALA SPONSORS



## ACTING TODAY FOR TOMORROW

Always Home is grateful to the following businesses for partnering with us to Prevent Family Homelessness. Each Corporate Sponsorship demonstrates a valued community investment in keeping parents and their children stably housed in the days ahead.

***ABC Photolab; Andersen Oil Co.; ASA Environmental Products; Block Island Express; Bouvier Insurance; Bridget Morrissey-EXP Realty; Cardinal Honda; Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut; Charter Oak Federal Credit Union; Chelsea Groton Bank; Chris Lewis-Randall Realtors Compass; Dime Bank; Fairview; First United Methodist Church; Garvey, Steele and Bancroft LLP; Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce; Groton Utilities; Hang the Moon; Harbor Heights Apartment Homes; Hartford HealthCare/Backus Hospital; IMT Realty; Marjorie and Neal; Melinda Carlisle-Randall Realtors Compass; Merrill Lynch; Miranda Creative; Mohegan Sun; Mystic Aquarium; Mystic Congregational Church; Mystic Financial Group; Mystic Seaport; Mystic Shipyard; Noank Baptist Church; Noank Village Boatyard; Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce; Pine Point School; Sava Insurance Group; Seaport Wealth Management; St. Mark's Episcopal Church; Stifel; StoneRidge Senior Living Community; Stonington Odd Fellows Lodge #26; The Day; The Union Baptist Church; The Whaler's Inn; Tito's Handmade Vodka; Tumolo Financial; Tricia Cunningham; Vail & Robson; and Yale New Haven Health-Lawrence + Memorial Hospital.***