



JULY 2022

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

History in the Making:

At the founding of Unity Acres, the country was in the throes of the Viet Nam War. Our veterans returned to a country divided over how and why the nation was involved in the war. The soldiers often did not return to a hero's welcome. Many suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) as well as drug and alcohol addictions. Many were surviving by wandering the streets and living under cardboard boxes. Father Ray McVey, and many others recognized the need, taking some into their homes, feeding them at Unity Kitchen, etc. Seeing the number grow, and wanting to help, Father Ray and a group from the community founded Unity Acres in Orwell, New York. "Unity Acres saved my life!" said John L., a former resident.

Following the purchase of the former Oswego County TB Sanitarium, Father Ray and a small group of volunteers from the Syracuse community proceeded to make Unity Acres a livable residence for homeless men. It has served thousands of such men over 50 years. Rules are simple: No violence and no drugs, including alcohol. Men generally cooperate working as a team in the kitchen, doing laundry, mowing the lawns, patrolling the buildings at night, etc.—whatever is needed. An AA group meets weekly in the Dining Hall.

Many men have spent a lifetime at the Acres. The final resting for over 250 of the men—including 75 veterans—is St. Martin de Porres Cemetery located on the property just over the bridge behind the buildings.

Unity Acres receives no government or Diocesan subsidies to meet our expenses; we depend heavily on gifts from individuals like yourself. Resident with an income contribute financially. Donors have been numerous and most generous over the years. However, contributors are fewer in number than in past years due to the aging of our donor group.

A Time for Renewal:

We are engaged once again in the slow process of building up and renewing this community of support for the men of Unity Acres. We do so in the spirit of Father McVey, who, when faced with unmet needs and unpaid bills, would always remark: “No problem: God will provide!” The last 30 pandemic months have presented us with new challenges and struggles.

We need to get the word out now as we are cautiously re-assessing and re-adjusting our mission in a rapidly changing (post?)-covid world.

Perhaps your church or community organization would like to learn more about Unity Acres. You may consult our website for more information on mission of Unity Acres, our on-going needs, current and past maintenance projects; many of our past newsletters are available at the ‘Archive’ tab. Please contact us at [**outreach.unityacres@outlook.com**](mailto:outreach.unityacres@outlook.com) if you would like a speaker to make a presentation.

The need for this service ministry is still great. Unity Acres is a place where the men receive a place to live in safety and dignity. We appreciate all you do and ask you to share our story with one of your friends or family members. The need now is to spread the word.

Elaine Crough, *for the Long-term Sustainability Committee*

