



Unity Acres

2290 County Route 2
P O Box 153
Orwell NY 13426

March 20, 2023

*Come to me,
all you who labor
and are burdened,
and I shall give you rest.*

—Matthew 11, 28

Dear Friends of Unity Acres:

March 20th: first day of spring! ... We are as yet experiencing very few signs here at the Acres, but we are forever hopeful. Snow is still quite evident, but will no doubt disappear with a few warm and sunny days. We have however heard a few flocks of Canada geese flying over, and before this last snowstorm we had one small patch of crocuses in bloom in the flower bed in front of our chapel.

Being now in the middle of Lent, we have added to our normal schedule of chapel services on Thursdays and Sundays mornings the commemoration of the Stations of the Cross on Friday afternoons.

With COVID seeming to be under better control, and thus we hope less threatening, we began once again to admit men to the Acres in May 2022. Since then, we've welcomed twenty-four men, of whom thirteen are 'new-comers' who've never been with us before, and eleven are 'old-timers' -- former residents.

Each of these men has his own story and circumstances and reasons for needing or wanting to come to Unity Acres. Some came because they no longer felt safe in their old neighborhood; others came from rehab centers, treatment centers or respite care.

Men have arrived from Syracuse and other parts of Onondaga County, from Oswego County, Rochester, Oneida and Watertown; one man from out of state. Some came because of difficulty maintaining their sobriety back home: they fell behind in their rent, were evicted and were thus rendered homeless. One gentleman lost his apartment due to a fire. At least one man was sleeping in his vehicle before being referred to us.

Others lost their benefits with DSS and had no other place to go. And all were welcomed at Unity Acres with very few questions asked. Our main request of each new resident is that they keep the peace, and try to get along his fellow community members. Although a few of these men stayed only for a few days or weeks, others remain for a bit longer and settle in. Occasionally one of the men will leave to pursue work or to obtain other housing, or enter a treatment program.

We are thankful to you for enabling us to offer our men a safe and helpful environment.

Gratefully,
Loretta Dickhout

You are Invited!

April 20th

11.00 AM

On **April 20**, we will be honoring the memory of Father Raymond McVey, the founder of Unity Acres, with the celebration of Mass at **11.00 am** in our Sacred Heart Chapel.

Father McVey was born on May 14, 1935, ordained on May 18, 1963, founded Unity Acres on March 3, 1969, and died on April 21, 1995.

Over the past few years, because of the pandemic, we have quietly observed the anniversary of Father Ray's death. This year, however, we again wish to remember and welcome all of Father's and Unity Acres' friends and supporters. Lunch will follow; please join us if you are able.

Our planned menu will consist of green salad, baked ziti, Italian bread, ice cream and cookies. We are so looking forward to seeing all of you after such a long absence. So please mark your calendars and come join us as we pay tribute to Father McVey on the twenty-eighth anniversary of his death.



An Attitude of Gratitude

I was asked a while back, by Loretta and Steve her son, staff here at Unity Acres, to write what Unity Acres meant to me since living here and what comes to mind is an oasis in the middle of a dry and barren desert. The men here at Unity Acres have been wounded either by circumstances or by personal choices they have made in their lives, and many were destitute, hope fading, families broken, and not seeing any light at the end of the tunnel. Today many, if not all of the residents here now see better days ahead, thanks to the faith that Father McVey had in humanity, that if given love, they could recover from the circumstances and choices they've experienced in life. Unity Acres is a throwback to the love a lot of us experience growing up as children, a return to a normal life, so longed for by everybody; it is truly a living blessing. Sometimes gratitude can be taken for granted, but the love we're experiencing here at Unity Acres is a lighthouse that is guiding lost souls to the safe shores of life. I haven't found many people, places or things that still adhere to the words of Jesus, love the Lord with all your heart, mind and soul, to love your neighbor as yourself. And for that I am truly thankful.

Sincerely,
Brian Hammonds, Resident