



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cecilia Tkaczyk

Mary Chisholm

CECILIA TKACZYK May 13, 2013



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

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Award: HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Year: 2013

Mary “Chiz” Chisholm, Executive Director of Chiz’s Heart Street, has touched the lives of countless individuals from all walks of life, including those diagnosed with schizophrenia, many struggling with drug and alcohol addictions and some who were previously homeless. No matter their circumstance, every person who has walked through the doors of Chiz’s Heart Street will agree that Ms. Chisholm saved their lives.

In her own words, Ms. Chisholm explains why the house is so unique and beneficial to the community. “What the house offers is a home where each person is held and acknowledged for who they are, just as they are; that they are beautiful and loved with no judgment.”

After decades of watching state budget cuts threaten residential treatment programs and hospitals struggle to house mentally ill patients long term without adequate funding, Ms. Chisholm set out to solve the problem and make sure that those who need help, get help. Any incoming resident sent by the hospital, the Department of Social Services, Adult Protective Services or the Mental Health Association, comes to Chiz’s Heart Street knowing they are entering a clean and sober house in which all residents must adhere to their treatment plans and agree to undergo drug and alcohol testing.

In addition to Ms. Chisholm providing shelter, compassion and plans for recovery, her house also offers a food pantry that serves approximately 400 people each month. In an effort to spread community spirit, when people come to the food pantry, they are helped by the residents of Chiz’s Heart Street. “It allows for people who have had so little in their lives to give to others,” Ms. Chisholm says. Her generosity, appreciation for quality treatment for all those who are mentally ill and her passion for making a difference are what set Ms. Chisholm apart. She is truly an inspiration.