

equinox news

Summer/Fall 2019

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Photo by Fred McKinney/Times Union, 1981

Giving Thanks for 50 Years

Many things have changed since the Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner began in 1969. But one thing has not: the generosity of our amazing community. This beloved event would not be possible without the more than **300 businesses, schools, congregations, organizations, farms, families, and individuals** who year after year donate funds, food, and supplies; and the nearly **4,000 volunteers** who peel, chop, cook, serve, clean and drive to make sure that **10,000 of our neighbors** in difficult circumstances can enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving dinner. We truly have much to celebrate!

To request a meal, call our TDay Hotline: 518.434.0131.

"Your kindness and generosity provided for a Thanksgiving where there would have been none. Your efforts were reassuring in a world which often is not."

—Beth, a Thanksgiving Dinner Recipient



Photo by Paul Buckowski / Times Union, 2015



Message From the CEO

The Many Faces of Equinox

Since starting my tenure as CEO in the summer of 2018, I've had a surprising number of local folks ask me about Equinox: What is Equinox? What do you do?

It's surprising because Equinox has been a staple of service in the community since 1947. Of course, most people are familiar with the high profile Thanksgiving tradition—now in its 50th year—of serving meals to the region's most needy, lonely or isolated individuals (10,000 last year). But, beyond that splendid event, I'm often asked, what do we do the other 364 days of the year?

While the answer to that question can be found, to some degree, in the many communications materials, websites and legal documents that we produce to speak to the community about who we are, mere descriptions like "nonprofit" or "human services," just don't capture the essence of what we do. Even detailed descriptions of our services only pierce the surface of the story. The list is impressive: Domestic Violence Services, Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Addiction Counseling, Services for Homeless and High-Risk Youth, and specialized housing for multiple vulnerable populations. But these efforts still cannot bring the feeling and meaning of our work to life.

Ultimately, the answer can be found in the faces of the people we serve:

In the face of a 17-year-old who recently showed up at the steps of our Transitional Living Program for homeless youth with a newly born infant in her arms and nowhere to go; in the tired but determined face of a PROS participant who mutters to me, on the morning elevator commute to our respective days, "I've been sober for 16 years"; in the face of a woman who realizes that she is safe, for the first time in years, at our secure Domestic Violence Shelter, ready to begin a new life; and in the face of an elderly man, trapped by loneliness and poor health, which lights up when a volunteer delivers a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner.

The list could go on. The faces, and the stories, continue to come to us. But our mission and determination to serve, to change lives and to build new futures remains constant. Thank you to all who support us. And thank you to those of you who allow us to serve you and share in your journey.

John Henley

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The Rev. Robert Lamar Memorial Award Commemorates 50th Anniversary of Thanksgiving Dinner

Equinox is pleased to present the Reverend Robert Lamar Memorial Award to the First Presbyterian Church of Albany and to the long-serving volunteer leaders of the Equinox Thanksgiving Dinner Committee. The extraordinary dedication of these recipients has made the Equinox Thanksgiving Community Dinner a cherished tradition for 50 years.

The Award was created in memory of Bob Lamar, the former senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Albany, a leader in interfaith and civil rights initiatives, founding member of the FOCUS Churches, and board member of many religious and human service organizations, including Equinox. His service to our community continues to inspire us.

The Lamar Award will be presented at the Equinox ThanksGathering Celebration on October 24. See the back page for details about the event.

The King Family Pathway to Success Fund

With great generosity, the King family has again partnered with Equinox to introduce the King Family Pathway to Success Fund. The Fund provides services for children and teens whose lives have been devastated by a parent's or guardian's substance abuse and addiction.

The Fund was started by Griffin King, who has lost two siblings to substance abuse, Kara in 2013, and Tyler in 2017. Kara left behind two small children who are now being raised by loving and supportive family members. Sadly, many children of addicts do not have this type of support. The Pathway to Success Fund will help offset costs of basic needs and life-enhancing opportunities for youth in Equinox programs.

We are grateful to the King Family for this investment in the success of children and teens so deserving of a bright future.

Did You Know?
1 in 8 American children live in households with at least one parent who has an alcohol or drug addiction.

50 Years of Equinox's Thanksgiving Community Dinner



The first Thanksgiving Community Dinner, held at the First Presbyterian Church in Albany, offers a holiday meal and fellowship to college students and Equinox volunteers unable to travel home because of a snow storm.

200 Meals & 50 Volunteers



TDay – as it has come to be known at Equinox – serves a growing crowd at First Presbyterian, and offers take-out meals. Home delivery service using volunteer drivers to reach elderly and homebound community members is launched.

750 Meals & 200 Volunteers



In the midst of a national recession in the late 1980s, requests for Thanksgiving meals soar. Equinox moves TDay preparations to the Knickerbocker Arena (now the Times Union Center) to meet needs.

2,500 Meals & 1,000 Volunteers



With 4,500 requests for delivered meals plus 500 served at the church, TDay operations move again – this time to the expansive catering kitchens at the Empire State Plaza, thanks to the generosity of the NYS Office of General Services.

5,000 Meals & 2,000 Volunteers



40th Annual Equinox Thanksgiving Dinner continues to be a cherished holiday tradition in the Capital Region.

7,500 Meals & 3,000 Volunteers



Nearly 1,000 volunteer drivers deliver meals throughout the Capital Region – covering nearly a 50-mile radius from Albany. As seen in the photo above, being #1 in the Drivers Line is a coveted position!

10,000 Meals & 3,500 Volunteers

ANNUAL **equinox** Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner

50th Anniversary Equinox Thanksgiving Community Dinner!

Proudly Supported by

• APARTMENT COMMUNITIES •

1969

1969
Equinox operates a 24-hour hotline and crisis intervention for runaway youth.

1970s

1976
Equinox opens its emergency shelter for homeless and runaway youth.

1980s

1980
Equinox opens mental health programs to meet needs of patients released from state hospitals.

1984
Counseling and advocacy services offered for victims of domestic violence.

1986
Equinox opens Albany County's only domestic violence shelter.

1986
GreatFinds women's thrift boutique opens.

1990s

1991
Street Outreach begins to help homeless and street youth at-risk of being trafficked or sexually exploited.

1992
The Family Resources program is created, offering support and counseling to families affected by mental illness.

1994
Youth Outreach Center opens, giving inner-city youth a safe and enriching place for after-school activities.

2000s

2008
Equinox adds services for elderly victims of abuse, and is the first domestic violence shelter in upstate New York to open its doors to gay and transgender victims.

2010s

2012
Equinox merges with ClearView Center. Domestic Violence, Youth, Mental Health, and Addiction Services are now available under one umbrella.



Thank You to Our Lead Community Partners

First Presbyterian Church of Albany



Equinox Beyond Thanksgiving

Equinox has had deep roots in the Capital Region since 1947.

These program milestones signify the powerful impact Equinox has made on our community in just the past 50 years.

Raising Awareness About Domestic Violence

B. Inspired a Huge Success!

It was a truly inspired evening. Set in the rustic Shaker Heritage Barn, B. Inspired brought together 270 guests for great food, wine and beer tasting, live music with dueling pianists, a Pearl Grant Richmans pop-up store, and a cooking demonstration by the fabulous Beekman Boys who were, well, fabulous. The pair –Josh Kilmer-Purcell and Brent Ridge, pictured below–mingled with guests, posed for selfies with fans, and signed copies of their cookbook, *A Seat at the Table*, which each guest received in their goodie bag.

Best of all, B. Inspired raised more than \$52,000 to support Equinox Domestic Violence Services!

A very special thank you to the evening's Honorary Chairs Anne Marie Franke, Jennifer McPhee and the entire Merrill Lynch Women's Alliance whose members came out in force to support Equinox and enjoy the event.

Many thanks to our other lead sponsors: B95.5 FM, Equinox Property Development and Management Companies, Beekman 1802, Pearl Grant Richmans, Hannay Reels, M&T Bank, and MVP Health Care.

We also extend deep and heartfelt gratitude to Katie Merrick, who shared her harrowing story as a victim of domestic violence and her incredibly inspiring story of survival.



Equinox Domestic Violence Services staff at B. Inspired. L-R: Sydney Clifford, Tracy Henry, Melissa Kovelman, Stephanie Lebrecht, Jayne Cosh, Brianna Wiederhold, Morgan Winters and Emily Schopf.

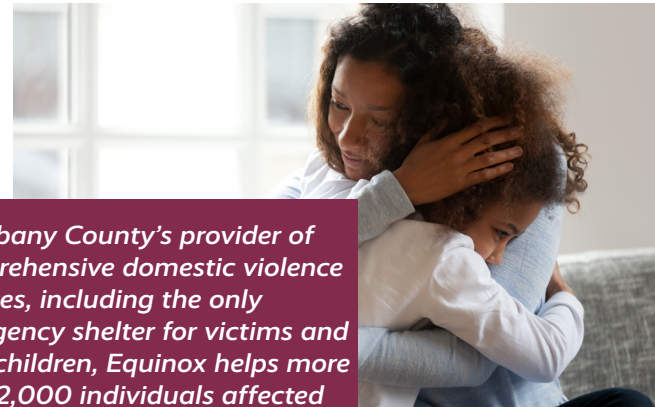


Raising awareness is a crucial step in ending domestic violence

Every October, during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), Equinox works in the community to raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence and the comprehensive services available at Equinox.

New this year is a benefit, "Humor for Healing," produced with a local stand-up comedy series, "Laughs on Lark." The evening will feature Caitlin Peluffo on October 10th at Savoy Taproom. Doors open at 7 pm and the show begins at 8 pm. Also, join us at The College of Saint Rose on Monday October 21st for a panel of domestic violence survivors.

To learn more about DVAM activities, follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/EquinoxAlbany](https://www.facebook.com/EquinoxAlbany)) or visit www.equinoxinc.org.



As Albany County's provider of comprehensive domestic violence services, including the only emergency shelter for victims and their children, Equinox helps more than 2,000 individuals affected by domestic violence every year.

AWARENESS + Action = Social Change



Colonie Students Raise \$12,000 for Equinox Domestic Violence Services!

Equinox's work to break the cycle of domestic violence had an impressive ally this year: The Colonie Central High School iCare organization. This student-run organization chose Equinox as its sole partner in tackling domestic violence and abuse. The iCare team planned and ran five major fundraising events, collaborating with nearly every club in the school to educate, fundraise and build support services for victims. Many, many thanks to these amazing students and to all the school personnel and community members who supported their efforts, raising \$12,000 to benefit Equinox Domestic Violence Services.



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Save the Date & Celebrate!



Presented by
Equinox Property Development & Management Companies

Be part of Equinox history as we celebrate the official kick off to the
50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Community Dinner!

Thursday, October 24, 2019
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Albany Capital Center • 55 Eagle Street, Albany, NY 12207

Music by the Accents • Wine, spirits and craft beer tastings • Hors d'oeuvres and chef stations by Mazzone Hospitality
Smile Lounge Photo Station • Celebration raffle and gift card pull • And much more!

Tickets are \$125 for individuals or \$225 for a couple. To make a reservation, or for more information, visit equinoxinc.org or contact
Christina Rajotte at 518.434.6135 x5366 or crajotte@equinoxinc.org.