

Community Warehouse Project receives AAUW Gateway to Equity Award

At its annual May Banquet and Awards Ceremony at McKenzie's Brew House in Malvern, AAUW West Chester -- Chester County presented its Gateway to Equity Award to the Community Warehouse Project (CWP). Executive Director Glenda Brion (left) accepted the award, presented by Anne Anderko, a past AAUW branch president and CWP volunteer.

"CWP's mission is to collect and redistribute donated furniture and other household items to families and veterans in need in Chester County. It's generally a one time, free service to pre-screened recipients, supported through the generosity of those within our community," explained Brion.

"We have a story to tell," she continued. "Most of the clients are single moms," said Brion, who herself was raised by a single mom. "So I know how important it is to have a home. But if you don't have furniture, you are more likely to become homeless again," she said, noting that 30 percent of families become homeless again if they don't have furniture. "Also, children are more likely to thrive in a furnished home; they are more hopeful."

CWP provides about 60 beds a month to families, and works with eight to 10 families each week. CWP gets referrals from teachers, churches, and over 60 area agencies with whom they work. "It's a team effort. None of us can do this alone," she said. "This past year, 72 veterans went through our program. We also helped when Hurricane Ida hit."

When an individual or family moves into an apartment, not only do they find furniture, but also shelf stable food from the Chester County Food Bank. "We use a moving company to pick up the furniture and move it to the client's apartment, as well as volunteers who have trucks, since most people don't have a way to transport furniture."

Brion is especially excited about a new project with West Chester University. "The director of off-campus housing has arranged for 60 graduating students, moving out of their housing, to donate their used furniture to the CWP!"

The Gateway to Equity Award is presented annually to a group, organization or individual that has shown by action and philosophy the promotion of the AAUW mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. The Community Warehouse Project was chosen from nominations made by AAUW members.

