



**CONTACT: Anne Mc Kenna, Director,  
Development and Community Relations  
(585) 256-3800, ext 231**

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### **Film -Maker Cynthia Lester Addresses East House Crowd of 320**

Hoarding was the topic of the second annual East House Hope & Recovery luncheon celebration, held Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, at the Double Tree Hotel in Rochester. 320 people attended the event, which featured filmmaker Cynthia Lester as guest speaker.

Ms. Lester's 2008 documentary film "My Mother's Garden" explored her family's struggle with their mother's severe hoarding disorder. "My Mother's Garden" won several awards and was shown and sold out locally in a 2009 collaborative project of the High Falls International Film Festival (now 360/365) and the Reel Mind Film Series. During the luncheon, surprising excerpts from the film were shown, in which Lester's mother, Eugenia, enters the house through a window. There is no room to walk in the house and no room to sit on the furniture. In fact, Eugenia slept outdoors because her house was too full of the items that she collected.

Lester shared insight into the reasons behind her mother's disorder, and discussed the family's efforts to come together, heal, and to find treatment for her. "I was fascinated by her film, and pleased that so many people came to hear from Cynthia, and to support East House," said steering committee chair Heather Keys.

Prior to the keynote address, East House 2010 Partner in Hope Awards were presented. Four individuals and one organization were honored for their efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals recovering from mental illness and chemical dependency. Lisa Babbitt, SPOA

Coordinator, Monroe County Office of Mental Health; Bob Brentson, Owner/President, InTech Solutions; Steve Lowden, Case Manager, Unity Evelyn Brandon Health Center; Mark Schwartz, Financial Aid Counselor, Monroe Community College; and the Rochester Female Charitable Society, have all gone above and beyond to work as caring partners with East House, contributing to the quality care that East House strives to provide to clients. In addition, Arthur and Barbara Hirst of Pittsford received the Pinny Cooke Lifetime Giving Award recognizing their dedicated and generous support of East House, and in particular, the agency's Career Services Program.

East House provides rehabilitative and residential services to more than 1000 people recovering from mental illness and substance abuse. The luncheon is part of East House's endeavor to help people with these illnesses to live more satisfying and productive lives. Beth Adams of WHAM 1180 served as emcee. Sponsors included Alesco Advisors, LLC, Buckingham Properties, Harris Beach, PLLP, De Paul Community Services, Financial Architects/Mass Mutual, First Niagara, Home Care of Rochester, Key Solutions of New York, The Mental Health Association, St. John Fisher College and Weinstein Murphy. \$10,000 in net proceeds from the luncheon will benefit East House programs. For more information, please contact Anne McKenna at **(585) 256-3800, ext. 231.**

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