***THE STOREHOUSE, INC.***

----- A Multi-Community Resource Helping the Rural Needy -----

Interest in establishing a thrift shop in the local region surfaced as early as October, 2002, following a conference of the Presbyterian Synod of the Northeast. By June of the following year, the Mission Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Worcester had proposed “The Storehouse Project,” which included two components, a thrift shop originally called “The Storehouse Agency” and an advocacy segment called the “services advisory agency.” The thrift shop would locate in East Worcester, while the church itself would provide “office space” for the advocate in Worcester. In September, 2003, the Committee requested start-up support in the form of grants from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery, and private foundations.

The Project was set to begin formally on January 1, 2004. The overall mission, including the thrift shop and advocate, was soon augmented by the establishment of the Worcester Food Pantry. It was directed at needy persons and families in a multi-community rural region where Otsego, Delaware and Schoharie Counties meet. Under the original guidance of Rev. Susan Strang, the advocate and Food Pantry were first located in the church basement at 174 Main Street in Worcester, but both soon moved one door east to the former Presbyterian manse at 178 Main.

In searching for a suitable place to locate the thrift shop, the Committee chose the vacant former Kemp general store at 68 Main Street in neighboring East Worcester, which at the time seemed the best available match because of its size and internal configuration. The Storehouse grand opening took place on March 6, 2004. It operated separately from the other two components, both administratively and financially, while maintaining a liaison that enabled each to act together in a parallel and effective manner, sharing information and resources.

On March 25, 2009, The Storehouse received a certificate as a charitable and educational corporation under Section 402 of the New York State Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, and on July 11, 2010 it adopted official Bylaws setting up a ten-member governing Board of Directors with a President and other officers. This move acknowledged the group's transformation into a non-sectarian body with representatives of all segments of the regional communities.

In the meantime, it had become apparent both that the needs of the public were not being met at the Kemp store, and that accessibility by both patrons and volunteers was inadequate at East Worcester. So in February, 2011, The Storehouse moved to a larger and more centrally-located facility in the Wightman Building, 145 Main Street in Worcester, the former location of the View Wright Video store. A large sign with The Storehouse' open-handed logo was installed over the front entrance in April. Then, on May 31 of the same year, the U.S. Government formally approved the organization for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code.

The organization grew and prospered for five years at its location in the Worcester business district – so much so that its directors decided to purchase the former home of Susan Moore at 332 Main Street further east in the hamlet, an even larger and more permanent and serviceable site which it will be able to maintain with proceeds from sales, to build equity, to escape the constant constraint of rental status, and to provide more goods and services to those in need.

The Storehouse took occupancy of its latest home on January 19, 2016. It is situated on nearly an acre of land, and was originally the historic Caryl House, a classic two-story hotel and ballroom which Leonard Caryl built in 1837 to complement the store which he had established diagonally across the street in 1826. In 1862, Agnes E. Smith, later the editor of *The Worcester Times*, opened a select school and boardinghouse for girls in the building. The ballroom became a classroom. Part of the Agnes Smith legend is that she was the first woman to cast a vote in New York State. After making alterations to accommodate the storage, sorting and display of its inventory, The Storehouse staff reopened to serve the public on February 25.

All these moves have taken place because economic conditions in rural Upstate New York have been uncertain and declining for several years, and for many families facing unemployment, illness, disaster, dysfunction and other crises, modern life has brought daily struggle and desperation. Some people need emergency food or clothes for babies and young children or for school, work, job interviews or new employment opportunities. Others seek household items such as curtains, dishes, cookware and bed linens when moving into a different home. Some have to replace things lost in a house fire, flood or other disaster. Some need minor repairs or improvements such as for weatherizing or leaks.

The Storehouse specializes in providing good-quality slightly-used clothing and household items which it makes available to needy and underprivileged families at little or no cost. It depends on public donations to supplement its monthly

income of approximately $1,200 from sales, and on volunteer staff. There have been grants from the Robinson-Broadhurst and Stanley Penksa Foundations along the way, to support special needs beyond normal operations. The Storehouse is open three days a week, Thursday through Saturday. It maintains active relationships with the Food Pantry and other regional organizations serving the needy, and is able to maintain a basic and informal referral capacity. It hopes eventually to engage a qualified advocate to render complete counseling advice and referral services to its clients.

The Storehouse meets a vital need in its three-county region – a unique need directed at a poor and vulnerable population which often has few if any resources to cope with desperate circumstances. It takes part in disaster relief activities, helps subsidize the Food Pantry, supplements the Wee Care effort for small children, and donates goods or other support through a wide variety of groups, including Worcester and Schenevus public schools, the Boy Scouts, Salvation Army, Family Services, Catholic Charities, City Mission, Lions Club, Susquehanna Animal Shelter, Soles for Souls, United Methodist Women, Springbrook home, SUNY Delhi business school, Worcester Christmas Basket Campaign, Charlotteville Schoolhouse, Nader Towers senior citizens, the Battered Women shelter, ARC Otsego, Upton Lake Christian School, Schoharie flood relief, and others.