



**HOMES** *with* **HOPE**

*Dedicated to Ending Homelessness in Fairfield County*



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT A BRIGHTER FUTURE AWAITS

Wow! What a difference a year can make.

While we are not yet completely free from COVID, it's so wonderful to be writing to you from a much brighter, positive place than 12 months ago. We couldn't have made it through all that we did without your support and certainly not without the hard work and commitment of our amazing staff and our dedicated Board of Directors. So, a huge thank you to all who made our achievements of this last year possible.

With the support of the Department of Housing, the Town of Westport, and, of course, your continued support, conversion and renovations of our **Project Return Home** and the renovation of the **Gillespie Center and Hoskins Place Shelters and Food Pantry** will be a big focus in the year ahead. Read more about these two exciting projects later in this report.


While these projects will have a significant impact on the success of our mission, it's essential that we do not lose sight of what we are already achieving with your generous help and support, which you can see from the data I've included on page three.

During the coming year, we're also looking forward to bringing back some long-standing favorites to our calendar, including our annual **Stand-Up Comedy Event** (Saturday, October 15, at the Quick Center for the Arts) and, hopefully before our next Annual Report, a return to our "live" **Gather 'Round the Table** luncheon.

What I've outlined here is an overview of what's going on at Homes with Hope. For that reason, I'd encourage you to read the complete report so you can get a fuller understanding of what we are doing within the community and the often life-changing impact we can have (with your help) on our clients' lives.

All the best to you and yours until I see you next.

Sincerely,



Helen McAlinden  
President and CEO



*Photo by: Mindy Briar*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**TO DONATE NOW,  
PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE  
WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA.**

*Select images courtesy of Lauren Schiller*

# BY THE NUMBERS

## FINANCIALS

Revenues	2020	2021
Private	2,281,625	2,690,632
Government	1,175,545	840,551
Other	557,789	564,284
Total Revenue	4,014,959	4,095,467

Total private contributions from fundraising and in-kind contributions increased by 18% in 2021 in support of our positive impact on homelessness, diversion, supportive housing and education.

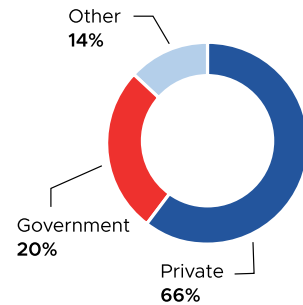
Expenses	2020	2021
Program	2,979,899	3,052,800
Management	264,966	293,000
Fundraising	312,094	354,419
Total Expenses	3,556,959	3,700,219

Through technology enhancements, process improvements and operating efficiency, over 82% of all funding is spent directly on services for our clients.

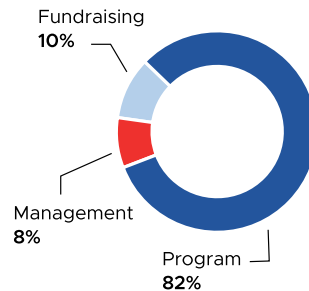
Assets	Current Assets	Net Assets
Beginning	1,256,798	2,659,748
Ending	1,767,971	3,054,996

Year end 2021 shows an increase in total current assets of 40% reflecting the positive trend in individual and private donations and Homes with Hope's strong liquidity position.

PERCENT OF TOTAL REVENUE BY SECTOR



EXPENSE ALLOCATION



# 2021 METRICS

SERVED **951** INDIVIDUALS OR HOUSEHOLDS\*



**82**

Men, Women, and Children living in **Homes with Hope's Permanent Supportive Housing**



**70**

Homeless Men and Women sheltered at **The Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place**. The **Community Kitchen** provided **21,000 meals** to clients & neighbors in need



**454**

Households received groceries through **the Food Pantry**, which is generously supported by the local community



**104**

Youth and Young Women supported by our **Youth Academic and Personal Growth Programs**



**28**

Homeless Individuals and Youth placed through **Rapid Re-Housing and YHDP**



**213**

Households received **Diversion Services** that helped identify immediate alternative housing arrangements to avoid homelessness



\*Some clients benefit from multiple Homes with Hope programs.

# EMERGENCY SHELTER



**The Gillespie Center** is Homes with Hope's 15-bed emergency shelter for single men. **Hoskins Place**, located in the same building, is a 4-bed emergency shelter for single women. These 24-hour facilities, provide Case Management Services and utilize a Housing First service model to assist shelter residents with ending their homelessness.

The **Gillespie Center/Hoskins Place** operated at a reduced capacity during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Working closely with Vanessa Hurta, Director of Clinical Services and Loren Pace, RN, Public Health Nurse of the Aspetuck Health District, the shelter continued to keep the transmission of the virus at an extremely low rate. During 2021, 70 guests were sheltered safely.



Two food programs are located at the shelter.

**The Community Kitchen** is supported by a very generous and devoted community of volunteers who provide meals 365 days a year. **The Food Pantry**, also supported and maintained by our dedicated community, distributes non-perishable food to all those in need.



# A STORY OF HOPE

One might think that growing up in one of the most affluent towns in the country, would safeguard a person from finding themselves living under a bridge. Yet, one client's story proves that no person or community is immune from homelessness. Born and raised in Fairfield County, he attended high school until the eleventh grade when he fell into drugs and alcohol and dropped out of school. After becoming addicted to heroin, he found himself in prison for 18 months and when released, he moved in with his father. His father died suddenly in 2021, and our client found himself alone with no means to pay the mortgage on his father's home.

*"When I was evicted, I have to be honest, I knew in the back of my head that it was going to be coming, but not until they actually come and the Marshals are there with the moving truck, and the locksmith is there cutting the locks off the door, you don't realize how much trouble or what is coming next. I was stuck on the street. I found a little spot under a bridge, and I was living outside for most of 2021.*

*You don't think it can happen to you, but homelessness can happen to anybody at any time... someone advocating for you is sometimes all you need. The people at Homes with Hope give you the support you need to get your foot in the door and get you back on track."*



Fortunately, through 211 outreach, he was referred to the Coordinated Access Network, which then referred him to the Gillespie Center in October of 2021 for emergency shelter. "Things are starting to look up. I have been sober for six months and I have found housing." He will be transitioning to a shared housing apartment with another Homes with Hope client and is grateful for all the assistance he has received.

# EDUCATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH

The **HEAL Community Service Program** saw its largest number of graduates in spring of 2021, which resulted in the addition of the HEAL Alumna group. This group currently meets virtually twice per month, and they have joined the high school and middle school groups in their volunteer efforts. Activities included decorating area senior centers with seasonal painted pumpkins and Valentines hearts, as well as leading preschoolers in activities like our Annual Spring Egg Hunt. They have provided the younger, newer HEAL members with a form of mentorship. HEAL currently has 6 groups across Fairfield County - Bridgeport (2), Norwalk (2), Westport (1) and Wilton (1).



The **Mentoring Initiative** matches individuals who find themselves struggling in various ways with volunteer mentors from the community. Current mentees register for nine months of 1-on-1 mentoring. They also have the option of a six week WE HEAL (Women's Empowerment) group session in the fall, and a six week WE HEAL session in the spring. Mentees can choose the level of support they desire and have found a sense of control and responsibility through their involvement. Mentoring relationships have remained steady, and the WE HEAL groups gathered and supported each other, as well as completed several service projects together such as creating welcome signs for community residents and handmade holiday gifts.



**Homes with Hope's After School Academic Program (ASAP)** is a small site-based after-school program for children and teens who live in Homes with Hope's Supportive Housing. The goal is to provide consistent structure, positive role models, academic support, and enrichment activities to help students develop the skills they need to be successful at school and in their personal lives. After graduating two seniors last year, ASAP welcomed four new students for the 2021-22 school year. This year, we have focused on the development of growth vs. fixed mind sets. This means replacing feelings of, "I stink. I can't do it. I'll never be able to do it," with, "I can't do it YET but if I keep at it and try new strategies and ask for help, I can do this!" Ongoing group activities promote self-awareness, positive thinking, and gratitude.



# HOUSING PROGRAMS



## Permanent Supportive Housing

Our dedicated Case Managers assist chronically homeless individuals living with mental illness. Their support has helped our individuals and families access needed services to remain independent and stably housed. We recently welcomed a new family to the ranks of the many long-term residents who have grown and thrived at Homes with Hope.



## Diversion

The Fairfield County, Coordinated Access Network (FFC CAN) continues to learn and adapt, implementing new strategies to help the homeless and those at risk for homelessness gain access to services. For many people who struggle with their mental health or alcohol/substance misuse, a housing crisis can easily become overwhelming and force a fragile person onto the streets.

Diversion is a strategy designed to collaborate with clients to identify immediate, alternative housing options to divert them from entering the shelter system. Homes with Hope's staff make every effort to divert clients to other housing solutions at their first contact with the homelessness response system.

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***When Paul finally moved into his new apartment, one of the first things he asked for was a pillow.***

At last, Paul was able to stretch out and rest his legs after living in his car for so many months. A senior citizen living on a fixed income, his legs had open sores and his health began to decline.

Paul was assisted to contact the Fairfield County, Coordinated Access Network, 211/Infoline and started working with a Diversion Specialist. He was worried about living in a homeless shelter and didn't think of himself as homeless.

With nowhere to go, Paul was referred to the Gillespie Center for nourishing meals, a warm shower and to care for his personal hygiene. Slowly, the Diversion Specialist began to work with him, and trust started to build. He allowed the Diversion Specialist to help him obtain the necessary documents he needed for housing. While Paul continued living in his car, he was connected to critical services that resulted in him being successfully housed.



## Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing involves a two-pronged approach to ending homelessness. Financial assistance plus Case Management creates an opportunity for many individuals and families to end their homelessness quickly. Short-term Case Management services connect these clients to needed resources, helping them successfully maintain their housing into the future. Two of our three RRH Case Managers work exclusively with young adults (aged 18-24).



# LOOKING AHEAD



## Project Return Reimagined

As a result of the latest research identifying the most effective tools for preventing youth homelessness in our region, we have reimagined our Project Return Program. We plan to renovate Susie's House, creating six single-occupancy en suite bedrooms. The home will offer a stable and nurturing housing solution with on-site support services that will provide women the opportunity to develop long-term self-sufficiency. The fully integrated Congregate Housing Program will prioritize homeless women aged 18 – 24.

## Upgrade of the Emergency Shelters and The Food Pantry

The second renovation project we are undertaking will be at the Gillespie Center and Hoskins Place Homeless Shelters and Food Pantry. We are working with an architect to improve the layout of the shelters and the food pantry to better meet the increasing demands within our community due to rising food and housing insecurity.

We are modernizing our facilities to meet the most pressing public health challenges associated with COVID-19.



# HwH STAFF



## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

**HELEN MCALINDEN**, President and CEO  
**PARIS LOONEY, LMSW**, Vice President and COO  
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**MAUREEN LIEBERGALL**, Director of Community Relations  
**KATIE FITZMAURICE**, Grant Writer/Director of Resource Development

## FULL-TIME PROGRAM STAFF:

**LYNN ABRAMSON, MA, Ed.**, Program Director  
**JENNIFER LYN AMON, BS**, Program Director  
**SHON'TEL CAMPBELL, BA**, Case Manager, Young Adult Rapid Re-Housing  
**WENDY EPSTEIN, LCSW**, Director of Supportive Housing  
**JOANN HUGHES, MSW**, Case Manager, Supportive Housing  
**CASSY JEAN, BA**, Case Manager, Rapid Re-Housing  
**IVELISSE MELENDEZ, BA**, Diversion Specialist  
**DAVONNAH MONK, BA**, Case Manager, Emergency Shelter & Supportive Housing  
**RYAN SOTO, MA, CMHC**, Program Director, Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place  
**LAUREN WACHNICKI, MSW**, Case Manager, Supportive Housing  
**DEMOLA BAMGBOSE**, Evening Supervisor  
**JESSICA POLLOCK**, Overnight Supervisor

## PART-TIME PROGRAM STAFF:

**CHYNNA EDMOND**, Shift Supervisor  
**RICHARD FRANK**, Shift Supervisor  
**ANTWAYN RIGGS**, Shift Assistant  
**EMILY SCHRECK**, Community Coordinator  
**KHALIF VALBRUN**, Shift Supervisor  
**MICHELLE VALBRUN**, Shift Supervisor  
**MATT WILSON**, Shift Supervisor  
**PATRICIA WILSON**, Shift Supervisor



**SAVE THE DATE**

**1**

**CELEBRATE 15 YEARS**

**OCTOBER 15TH**

**STAND UP 2022 WITH PAT MCGANN**

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 15, 2022**

**QUICK CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
200 BARLOW ROAD • FAIRFIELD**

