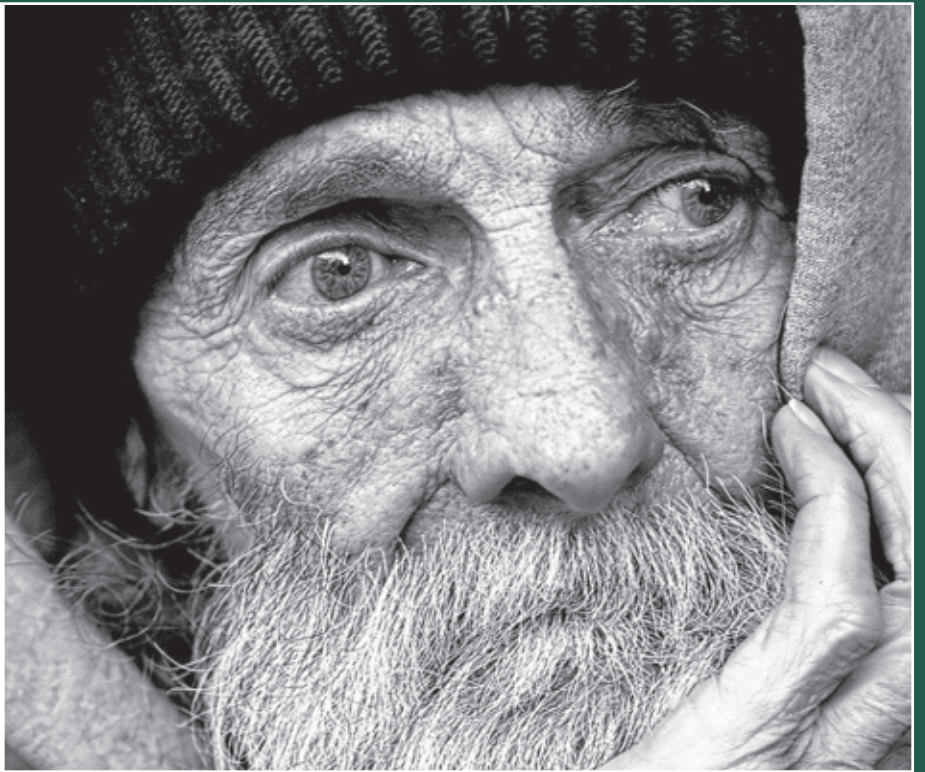




Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



*“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil,
but because of those who look on and do nothing.”*

– Albert Einstein
theoretical physicist

Bethesda House is an interfaith ministry to the homeless, disabled, and economically disadvantaged citizens of Schenectady County. We strive to build a just, hospitable and inclusive community one person at a time, by affirming the dignity and addressing the needs of each guest that enters this

House of Mercy.



Day Program Guest

834 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12307 | (518) 374-7873 | www.bethesdaHS.org

Table of Contents

A Message from the Board President	2
Bethesda House at a Glance	3
Introduction	6
Program Department.....	9
Coordinated Entry & Overnight Emergency Shelter.....	12
Case Management	14
Social Work Services	18
Residential Services	20
Capital Project: Cara House	23
Looking Back.....	24
Financial Summary	Inside Back Cover

Special Thanks

The administration of Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. gratefully acknowledges the work of its Directors and staff, who are responsible for providing and gathering the necessary data and information to compile this annual report.

The support that Bethesda House receives from the interfaith community through generous contributions, in-kind items, and volunteer hours is immeasurable. The concept of Bethesda House was born out of the interfaith community's recognition of the tremendous needs of the homeless and disadvantaged population of our Schenectady community. Over the years, as the agency has grown and our needs have increased, we have never been left to stand-alone. Bethesda House is deeply grateful for the on-going support and continued commitment to our shared vision of ending homelessness.

A Message from the Board President

Dear Friends,

What a year it has been for Bethesda House!

A pivotal award for a new facility has the agency poised to more than double its capacity and help more in the community in the coming year. A culmination of several years of work and multiple grant submissions resulted in approval to build Cara House, a 42-bed facility. Twenty-six permanent supportive housing units will be dedicated to the chronically homeless and individuals recently released from incarceration. In addition, sixteen emergency shelter beds will help to stabilize homeless and vulnerable single adults. Staff will provide services to help individuals successfully transition back into the community.

There are so many people to thank, who came together to make this new build possible. Kimarie Sheppard Bethesda House's Executive Director led the charge in working with board members, supporters of Bethesda House, and community leaders to pull together a submission and funding package that made the winning of the award possible.

Kimarie was able to take lessons learned from the first two denied attempts and work to improve on items that fell short. This included amongst several other items reducing the ask by involving additional funding sources, improving the financial health of the agency, building in processes and procedures to manage growth, and reducing the overall facilities cost per bed.

The Board of Director's cannot thank the Agency's staff enough for their hard work and continued dedication especially through the past year with COVID still in our midst and the increasing need of those in the community.

Thank you to our community partners and all the supporters of Bethesda House for helping to bring Cara House from a vision to an active project that will soon be a haven to those in need.

We appreciate your blessings and continued future support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Terwilliger', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Cathy Terwilliger, Board President

Bethesda House at a Glance



“My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice.”

– Bryan Stevenson
social justice activist

Consumers Served

The numbers cited in the table below only begin to tell the story of the people we serve and the variety of services we offer. These figures represent thousands of hours of case management, social work- behavioral health, emergency services, life skills, and residential services.

2020-2021 numbers continue to be lower than earlier years due to COVID-19 and the CDC safety measures that were implemented.

Guests Served	Total 2020-2021	Total 2019-2020
Guests	49,178	54,642
Unduplicated Guests Receiving Services	5,334	5,926
First Time Guests	1,601	1,778
Homeless Guests	3,650	4,055

Program Department Services The numbers reflect cumulative totals of services provided.	Total 2020-2021	Total 2019-2020
Consumer Choice Food Pantry – Meals Served	15,469	12,195
*P.G. Wright Food Pantry – Meals Served	2,275	8,991
Clothing Room	796	884
Showers	4,043	2,843
Telephone	450	849
Hygiene Kits	350	407
*Mailboxes	45,910	45,910
Daily Meal	21,116	27,792
Laundry	2,000	2,095
Lockers	5,023	8,544

* The location for the P.G. Wright Food Pantry is undergoing new construction. As such, the utilization for the food pantry was dramatically reduced.

Case Management Services The numbers reflect cumulative totals of scheduled appointments.	Total 2020-2021	Total 2019-2020
Housing, Permanent and Emergency	3,764	4,182
Representative Payee	2,500	2,953
Case Management Services	2,953	2,982
Emergency Services	1,110	925
Referred for Income	600	631
Secured Income	100	147
Social Work avg monthly caseload / contacts /month	65 / 5,200	50 / 4,800
Transportation Program	700 / 1,600 trips	504 / 1,200 trips
CASAC- DSS Assessments completed & follow-up	883	1,233
Outreach Case Management: individuals / contacts	520 / 1,600	379 / 1,310
Health Home Care Coordination individuals	220	286
Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner avg monthly caseload	30	40
*Continuum of Care (COC) Coordinated Entry Referrals	259	803
*Continuum of Care (COC) Coordinated Entry Housed	136	563

Residential Services	Total
Lighthouse total served including Veterans	18
Liberty Apartments total served	20
Beacon Scattered Sites	12

Code Blue Emergency Shelter 11/01/20 - 5/2021	Total
Un-Duplicated Guests served	54
Beds utilized	111
Number of Males	42
Number of Females	11

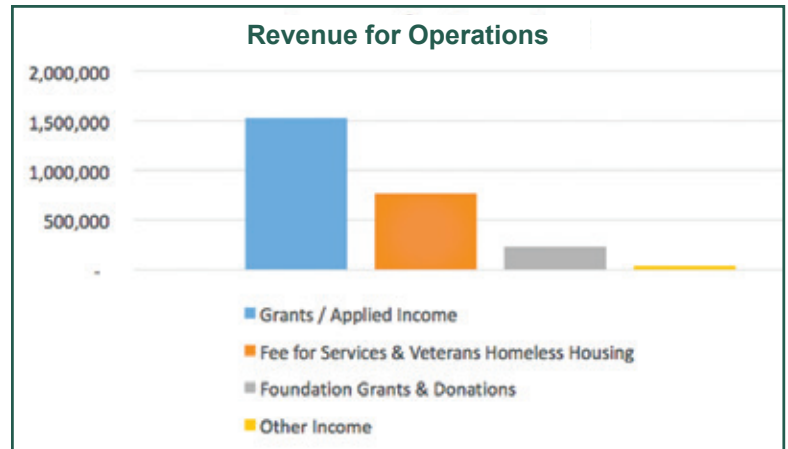
Emergency Overnight Shelter	Total
Program Shelter Stay participants (unduplicated)	206
Total utilization of shelter stay beds	351
Total beds approved for shelter stay	14
Number of Males	146
Number of Females	60

- *CoC is community-wide, includes 13 area providers.
- Area providers referred 3,250 individuals to Bethesda House for: Case Management – 920, Home Connections – 320, Emergency Services – 1,100, Social Work and Mental Health stabilization- 870, and 40 Residential Services
- Case Management and Program staff referred 200 consumers to area providers to best meet the needs of the individuals.

*Mailbox calculation: 85 (3+82) mailboxes, 3 general, 95 individual; 95 individuals use the general mailboxes; 82 individuals have their own mailbox, available to users 249 days a year; 96% utilization rate

Revenue & Expenses

Revenue	Amount
Grants / Applied Income	1,531,740
Fee for Services & Veterans Homeless Housing	765,878
Foundation Grants & Donations	228,252
Other Income	42,095
Total Income	2,567,966



Expense	Amount
Program	2,243,160
Management & General	73,038
Fundraising	21,661
Total Expense	2,337,859



In-Kind & Volunteer	
Volunteer Hours, includes Board of Director Hours	5385
Value of Hours	225,007
Value of Donated, In-kind Items	82,841

Introduction

Administration and staff of Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. are pleased to present to you, our Board of Directors, referring agencies, consumers, regulatory and policy making agencies, and friends, this Annual Program Report for fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Accountability, to both the consumers we serve and the community that supports our mission, is important to Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. Fundamental to the principles and values of the interfaith communities, the staff of Bethesda House views our agency as a living body, which is always growing and learning. This report reflects some of the agency's experiences of 2020-2021. We are confident, as we reflect on this year, that we are better positioned to serve those who will come to us in the future because we are learning from our past.

Bethesda House is an essential agency and as such we never closed, never stopped providing services, and never provided services virtually. The Agency faced unique challenges of the past year and adjusted operations to follow CDC safety protocols while committing to maintaining emergency services. Administrative staff collaborated with area providers and met regularly with the Schenectady Public Health Department who provided critical information to assist in decision making and navigating through the pandemic. When the vaccine was first available, staff rolled out information and coordinated communication to inform and encourage our staff, residents, day program guests and shelter guests to receive accurate medical recommendations and pursue the vaccine for those willing. The Agency's service delivery methods were fluid and constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of the community while maintaining safety and service.

Bethesda House increased food programs to include CDPHP's Food is Medicine and a Google Voice system to access our food panties. We also provided pantry food bags for individuals discharged from hospital settings, and delivered food to households that were under quarantine. By way of the Unite Us interagency referral platform, Bethesda House Food and Pantry Programs received community-based referrals for emergency food bags to be delivered to homes of residents that could not easily access food resources.

Bethesda House was part of a coalition that went to homeless encampments to provide basic living services

such as food and warm clothing, and offered transportation to medical and mental health care. It was a collaboration of local agencies, the Schenectady Police Department, and Office of Community Services in order to engage homeless individuals who were in imminent risk of medical or mental health crisis, or to prevent police contact. The coalition continues today to address the extremely hard to serve and to remove barriers to service.

The Agency is experiencing a dramatic change in our emergency shelter. There is an increase in medically fragile, severely mentally ill, and developmentally delayed homeless adults. Bethesda House staff are helping individuals who, for the first time in their lives need assistance; people who are aging, individuals who have lived their lives on the streets and could no longer tolerate the cold; and people with unaddressed, complex medical and mental health needs that require immediate attention.

Due to the comprehensive services offered at Bethesda House, the agency has received referrals for homeless individuals that require a higher level of support, connection to community services, adherence to medical and mental health treatment, and greater oversight in regards to personal safety. As a result, Housing Case Managers are working and interacting with state agencies, service providers, and residential programs to such specialized populations.

As we compiled the data for this report, we are mindful that we are presenting consumer related data and demographic information; we are providing the reader with outcome material that may or may not reflect the policy objectives of those who set policy.

If our consumers report that they are feeling more hopeful about the future, more prepared to deal with life's adversities, and more capable of caring for themselves and their families because of Bethesda House, we consider such an outcome a success. It is this success that drives the actions of our staff and inspires us to keep working on behalf of our consumers.

This Annual Program Report covers seven service dimensions of the agency: Program Department: Day Program Drop-in Center/ Essential Services, Overnight Emergency Shelter, Coordinated Entry, Case Management,

Social Work – Behavioral Health, Residential Services, and Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling (CASAC).

- Bethesda House's Program Department is comprised of a variety of individual services that meet the needs of Schenectady's homeless and working poor population. The goal of the combined day drop-in and essential services programs is to provide crisis management, harm reduction, and stabilization in the lives of the individuals who are experiencing overwhelming challenges of life and who are seeking support and guidance.

The Program Department has more than one contract source. The City of Schenectady, Schenectady County, NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA)'s Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP), Regional Food Bank, Concern for the Hungry, DEC Emergency Food Program, and private foundations and donors all support the services offered by this department.

- Overnight Emergency Shelter – The Agency offers a 14-bed Overnight Emergency Shelter, 365 days of the year. The shelter is expanded during cold weather to operate a CODE BLUE Shelter. The shelter is designed to provide a safe and secure environment to homeless single adults in Schenectady County while incorporating higher-level support and case management with Social Workers, Outreach staff and Mental Health Professionals. Hours of operation are from 5:30 pm – 8:00 am, seven days a week.

The Overnight Emergency Shelter is funded through the Schenectady County Department of Social Services. Generally, the Code Blue Shelter is approved by New York State, Schenectady County Department of Social Services distributes funding.

- Coordinated Entry is designed to track the most vulnerable homeless families and individuals in need of housing from the point of entry into the Continuum of Care tracking and wait-list system to the moment when they secure housing. Bethesda House is the lead agency; the Agency partners with Legal Aid Society of NENY.

The Coordinated Entry program is funded by the US Department of HUD.

- The Case Management Department provides a variety of services to all guests experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless. The goal for each

homeless individual who walks through our door is to address the immediate critical need, and then to proceed toward the overall goal of moving individuals out of the cycle of homelessness.

The Case Management Department has more than one contract source. The City of Schenectady, Schenectady County DSS, and private donors support the services offered by this department.

- Our Social Work Department provides mental health services to the agency's guests and residents, completes mental health evaluations, and initiates referrals to area mental and medical health providers. The walk-in counseling availability and lack of barriers support the reduction of Emergency Department utilization. Under the umbrella of the Social Work Department is the Health Home – Care Management Agency (CMA).

Bethesda House has a student internship program; graduate level students from University at Albany, Fordham University, and Simmons College (Boston, MA), as well as undergraduate students from Siena, the College of St. Rose, and Ellis Medical Center Nursing Program, are supervised by our Licensed Social Workers. Interns benefit from a hands on learning experience working with our community's homeless and impoverished citizens who are substance users, mentally ill (who typically self-medicate with illegal drugs), who are experiencing trauma, and are struggling with other chronic crisis driven issues.

The Social Work Department has more than one contract source. NYS OMH through the Schenectady County Office of Community Services, Schenectady County (under the Home Connections program), Alliance for Better Health Care, and Department of Health through St. Peters Health Partners Health Home program.

Bethesda House has operated under the "Housing First" model since 1998. Housing First focuses on providing housing first for the chronically homeless population, and then combine that housing with supportive treatment services in the areas of mental and physical health, substance abuse, education, and employment. In 2002, the Agency opened its first residential program, in 2010 the second residential program and in 2017 the third residential program. The "Housing First" model is woven into all services provided by the Agency. Staff work diligently with residents to overcome life challenges and to help provide a safe, comfortable, and welcoming home for everyone to enjoy and find solace.

Residential programs include the Lighthouse - seven beds, Liberty Apartments - sixteen beds, and the Beacon - eight scattered-site apartments. All of the residential programs are permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless adults with a history of untreated, severe, and persistent mental illness and other disabling conditions. We provide advocacy, housing, and a safety net for our residents. Staff address the needs of the whole person focusing on empowerment, personal growth, skill building, and discovery of an individual's strengths.

The Lighthouse Program's additional three beds are transitional housing beds for veterans. Agency staff work closely with Albany Veterans Administration staff, providing a safe and stable setting while the veterans begin treatment and work on financial stability; long-term services are secured after completion of our program.

The Residential Services Department has more than one contract source. The Department of HUD, NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) NYS Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP), Veterans Administration, and private donors support the services offered by this department.

- The Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling (CASAC) program performs drug and alcohol assessments, re- assessments, and/or drug screenings as referred by Schenectady County Department of Social Services (SCDSS).

The CASAC program has one contract with Schenectady County.

Bethesda House ministers to a vulnerable, diverse, and challenging population. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the agency would not be successful without the incredible, selfless support from our volunteers.

Agency staff regularly attend meetings with:

Housing and Supportive Services Network
Homeless Veterans
Single Point of Access Committee (SPOA)
Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB)
Eviction Task Force
Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community
Coordinated Entry
CDPHP – Food is Medicine Program

Mental Health Sub-Committee
Concerned for the Hungry
Schenectady County Re-entry Task Force
HSPB – Data Committee
Adults at Risk – Schenectady County
The Food Pantries of the Capital District

Bethesda House has a variety of linkage agreements throughout the professional community.

Linkage Agreements:

The Alliance for Positive Health
Catholic Charities AIDS Services
The Center for Community Justice
Healthy Schenectady Families
Schenectady County Re-Entry Task Force
Legal Aid Society of NENY
Cornell University Cooperative Extension
New Choices Recovery Center
The City Mission
Center Office of Fair Housing
SAFE Inc. of Schenectady
Schenectady County Department of Social Services
Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP)
Schenectady Home Town Health Center Schenectady
Municipal Housing Authority (SMHA)
Sexual Assault Support Services of Planned Parenthood
Mohawk Hudson (PPMH)
The YMCA of Schenectady

Bethesda House's Administration is fully invested in the freedom to be creative, to pioneer useful solutions and implement positive changes within the agency. Agency leadership is examining how effectively the agency works with area service providers, as it is essential that duplication of services is avoided, and working collaboratively is in the best interest of the population we serve.

Worker safety is the common thread running through all of our departments and remains a priority.

The staff and administration of the agency wish to express our gratitude to the Board of Directors of Bethesda House. The Board's support and commitment to the agency are salient reminders to all of us, of the importance of our work. We are partners in ending homelessness and providing hope in the lives of Schenectady County's most vulnerable population. ***Thank you!***



Program Department Purpose – is to provide a safe, supportive environment for homeless, vulnerable, and/or at-risk individuals to have access to a wide variety of services under one roof. The Program Department's Drop-in Center is the point of entry to all Agency services, which range from basic living needs to intensive case management.

Services That Are Available and Offered:

Drop-In Center – the Agency does not screen or work by appointment; everyone in need of services are welcome to sit and be in a secure, welcoming environment. It is a place that provides non-judgement, social supports, and sense of belonging. It is known to the community as a safe place and is often the only connection that our population has to services and trusting relationships. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday; 9:00 am – 11:30 am then 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm. All services are free.

Food Programs – the Agency implemented a nutrient dense, nutritional platform in all the food programs offered. Healthy, low fat and low sodium foods are offered at the daily meal and at our two food pantries. Our partner, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, provides monthly nutritional education and cooking classes, using items from our food pantry.

SNAP benefits are discussed, as well as the importance of budgeting food resources. In addition, other community services and resources are reviewed and explained which also help to stretch a SNAP budget.

Daily Community Meal (Soup Kitchen) – healthy, nutritional meals are prepared by our experienced and talented Chef and his team. The daily meal is served Monday – Friday from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm. Following the COVID-19 protocols, hours of operation have shifted to 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm with options to take food out. Staff and guests strictly follow recommendations.

Client Choice Food Pantry – The main food pantry at 834 State Street and our satellite food pantry located at the Northside Village apartment complex in the 12308 zip code, offer a variety of food items. The Regional Food Bank's annual award and donated dollars, specifically allocated to the food program, support food item purchases. In the past year, there has been an increase in referrals and requests for food bag deliveries.

Other Pantry Partners – Concerned for the Hungry, Food Pantries of the Capital District, and the Regional Food Bank have food drives and food donations to supplement both food pantries.

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

— Nelson Mandela
Former President of South Africa

Day Program guests are offered support from the Licensed Clinical and Masters Social Worker, and our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner who are available to explain the direct connection between nutrition and health. Healthy food choices are suggested along with education on the impact of poor nutrition on health. We have found that this approach, along with collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, is met with enthusiasm.

Basic Living Needs – Laundry, showers, mailbox (use of Agency address), telephone and fax services are available daily. Program staff are available to assist in these services as needed. The availability of phones has allowed numerous people the opportunity to arrange for job interviews, and follow up contacts with critical outside institutions such as the Social Security Administration and Schenectady County Department of Social Services for benefits and monthly cash assistance.

Clothing Room – Donated clean, gently used or new clothing is provided in our easy access clothing room. The clothing room is available each Wednesday and available Monday – Friday for emergencies and area provider’s referrals.

Critical Services – Bethesda House is known for offering a wide range of critical services to the public. The Agency works with community providers and several outside facilitators to provide on-site education and service connection to those who access the Drop-In Center. Program and services such as: Safety Counts, STD testing and education, blood pressure clinics, substance abuse support, and nutritional education, are a part of the Day Program. In addition, our partnerships with CDPHP and Fidelis provides access to referral services to health insurance.

Bethesda House partners with local justice officials to provide opportunities for individuals to complete community service hours and to receive on-the-job training.

Schenectady Job Training Agency (SJTA) is active in referring high school students to the Agency for on-the-job training opportunities through the Federal Work Study Program. Each summer the agency is able to work with two (2) – three (3) high school youth on specific job skills through coaching and mentoring. These youths gain a greater understanding of what it means to work for the first time in a professional setting.

A monthly House Meeting is held to address areas of concern with guests and also allows the guest a forum to discuss issues or items of interest that need to be brought to the attention of staff.

Administration and Program staff continue to actively reach out to local colleges and high schools, offering opportunities for internships and community service hours. We would not be able to offer the variety of services we do without the generosity of the community. The agency participates in community events such as the Annual Carrot Festival, Stand Down and SEFA Day. However, due to COVID-19, community events were put on hold for the 2020-2021 year.

Support Groups – Agency staff partner with area providers to offer women’s and men’s support groups.

Women’s Support Group began in 2000 under the guidance and leadership of former employees, volunteers, and staff from the YWCA and Planned Parenthood. The level of connection and commitment developed over time, and has been a significant resource for women in the Schenectady community. Pre-COVID, this group met every Thursday to discuss addiction, abuse, homelessness, love and loss, in a covenant of confidentiality. The facilitators offer the participants opportunities to grow, with the occasional outside speaker, arts and crafts, and self-care. The spring of 2021, we began gradually bringing women’s group back together. Group participants readily came back and are deeply grateful for the continuation of this important service connection.

Men's Support Group celebrates six years of camaraderie. The facilitators of this group lead the discussion on topics such as health, parenting, community, violence, being role models, and Spirituality. Guest speakers lead discussions on more sensitive topics such as terminal illness and trauma and loss. Men come together to share their thoughts and feelings and to work toward breaking down the barriers that confine them. The group meets at the State Street Presbyterian Church on Catherine Street every Thursday from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. The group meetings were put on hold due to COVID, however plans are developing to bring this essential group back together.

How the Program Department Works – the department provides an atmosphere of acceptance where individuals feel that they will be safe as they grow in self-worth, dignity, and self-respect. Individuals meet with staff to obtain one or more services or simply to sit and be safe. Engagement is a critical component to gain trust and begin the process of accepting in-house referrals or referrals to area providers to improve and stabilize individual's lives.

The Future of the Program Department – The goal of this department is to expand services. The Agency will strengthen its use of role models or examples of healthy behavior, appropriate social skills and decision-making skills to promote overall wellness. Staff will work with facilitators to support individual and group sessions on grief and loss, effective communication, and consequential thinking. This in an effort to improve self-awareness and reduce the risk of repeated mistakes or common pitfalls.



Melissa R., Administration Assistant, checks in Day Program guests.



Kimberly M., Day Program Coordinator.



Al B., Community Food & Nutrition Coordinator, prepares daily meal.



Schenectady Coordinated Entry Purpose – The purpose of the program is to provide a uniformed approach in identifying, engaging, and assisting homeless individuals and families effectively, and to ensure that those who request assistance are connected to proper housing programs and services.

How Coordinated Entry Works – Coordinated Entry uses a standardized assessment tool and incorporates a system-wide housing first, client choice approach, prioritizing housing for those with the highest service needs.

Coordinated Entry is a HUD funded program that is facilitated by Bethesda House and the Legal Aid Society. The partnering agencies are New Choices Recovery Center, SCAP, YMCA, YWCA, Mohawk Opportunities, Schenectady Municipal Housing, SAFE Inc., Soldier On, VCHC, the Alliance for Positive Health, and the Re-entry Task Force. Individuals are able to access this program through multiple agencies but will receive the same consideration. It is the ‘no wrong door’ approach and it ensures a smooth interagency referral process.

In, 2020-2021 there was a total of 259 homeless singles and families, who entered a community based organization.

Overnight Emergency Shelter – The Agency offers a 14-bed Overnight Emergency Shelter, 365 days of the year. The shelter is expanded during cold weather for the State mandated Code Blue program. The shelter is designed to provide a safe and secure environment to homeless single adults in Schenectady County while incorporating higher-level support and case management with Social Workers, Outreach staff and Mental Health Professionals. Hours of operation are from 5:30 pm – 8:00 am, seven days a week.

Services Offered During Shelter Hours:

- Shelter bed – A clean space, bed, and blanket in a secure setting monitored by Shelter Aides and Agency Front Desk/Security.
- Food – a meal is prepared by Agency Chef and offered for breakfast and dinner.
- Clothing – access to the clothing room is available and staff encourage use of weather appropriate attire.
- Shower – personal hygiene is encouraged and showers are available up to 9 pm.
- Laundry – services are available upon request.
- Storage Lockers – Shelter offers a locked and monitored lockers to keep personal belongings.

- Medication Storage: Shelter offers a locked medication storage system and assists shelter guests with prompts and reminders.
- Intake and Assessment – is processed by Agency Shelter Aides and an Intensive Case Manager. In-house referrals are completed for housing, medical, mental health, and substance use engagement and connection.
- Social Work Services - Licensed Social Workers meet with individuals to complete a psych-social assessment and work to connect each individual to appropriate services.
- Transportation - transportation assistance in accessing Schenectady DSS, medical/mental health appointments, and apartment searches.

Success Stories, Day Program and Overnight Emergency Shelter:

Bethesda House has developed a service approach that goes beyond traditional service delivery. We offer emergency services such as a shelter bed, shower, seasonal clothing, and a hot meal, which is valuable; however, it is the unique wrap around services and ability to accommodate special needs that often lead to success or progress for our guests. The following stories illustrate this approach.

James:

James is a 30-year-old man who is developmentally delayed and recently was removed from his abusive family setting. The housing plan for him was to move into a residential program however, the process was to take time and he required emergency housing. He was working with a case management agency under OPWDD to assist in his transition to permanent housing, and Bethesda House was responsible for maintaining his safety, medication compliance, doctor's appointments, and nutritional needs. BH's shelter and support staff, social workers, and day program staff were available to provide the higher level of support in order to address his vulnerability, and needs for case management throughout his shelter stay. James utilized the BH shelter for 4-months until he moved into a residential program. He had established supportive relationships and his shelter experience was so positive that he maintains contact with staff to this day.

Navigating challenges to obtain a level of success:

Bethesda House is dedicated to provide for the most difficult to serve and connect them to life sustaining services. This was even more imperative during COVID when many previous supports and services were suspended. Some of the cases we were able to serve by adjusting our processes and making accommodations involved guests coping with significant mental illness, chronic substance use, and chronic, pervasive physical illness. In one particular situation, a woman who was suffering from delusions and schizophrenia was living on the streets. Her family was invested in helping her and requested BH to offer emergency services and safety prior to their attempt to relocate her closer to family. This woman could not access services in the traditional sense which would be going to Social Services and sitting through intakes and assessments, because of her mental state. It was decided that we would provide services in any manner possible. Through great effort, BH was able to engage the client, offer a safe place to sleep and meals. Social Work staff worked closely with the family to facilitate this process. At one point, the guest became unsafe due to her mental illness and clinical staff contacted Schenectady County Office of Community Services to request a pick up for emergency psychiatric evaluation. This was executed and the woman was able to receive the mental health services desperately needed for her wellbeing. Social Work staff continue to work with her family and provide support to them.



Deanna C., Care Coordinator, meets with a Health Home client.



Case Management Purpose – is a collaborative process involving those we serve, outside agencies, and community service providers. The process encompasses assessment, planning, facilitation, care management, evaluation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's crisis and housing placement needs.

Services Offered:

Initial Intake and Assessment – Case Management is available through Schenectady County Department of Social Services referrals, in-house referrals, and for those walking in for services and reporting a need. Case Managers will triage and assess the immediate needs, eligibility for entitlement programs, and review both in-house services and/or area providers for possible service referrals.

Financial Case Management/Representative Payee Program: Proper financial management has been shown to be a pivotal component to stabilization in the community. Assistance in payment of bills and budgeting of personal needs allows those we serve to maintain safe housing, ensure that they have proper resources, and encourages planning and foresight. Bethesda House is able to act as a Representative Payee for those who are unable to manage or direct the use of his or her benefits. Staff meet with

program participants regularly and as needed to create a budget to pay bills, address wellness needs, and review personal essentials so that all aspects of their lives are being appropriately addressed.

The program is extremely successful in reaching the goals of continued housing and income stabilization. Despite its successes however, participants benefit from constant encouragement and education on the procedures of oversight and accountability in the program. Staff provide counseling, crisis management, and consequential thinking to participants, and as individual lives change, so will their budget.

In addition to Financial Management, staff establish proactive relationships with landlords to ensure a stable housing situation. Staff will work in collaboration with clients to address any issues regarding Independent Living Skills, rental agreements, safety in order to advocate with landlords to prevent risk of eviction.

Case Managers will also identify individuals who may be eligible for SSI benefits and will assist in the completion of SSI/SSD Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) application, which expedites the process. The SOAR application is at no cost to the person.

Shelter/Housing – The Housing First model, which is employed by all departments within the agency, continues to be our guiding principle as we search to find permanent housing options for the most vulnerable.

Case Managers connect and engage with single adults utilizing the Agency's emergency shelter, community emergency shelters, and walk-ins and community referrals. Staff have a strong partnership with Schenectady County DSS, which aids with the transitions from emergency shelter to permanent housing in the community.

Case Managers prioritize serving the entirety of the individual and focus on wrapping comprehensive services before, during and after housing is secured. Contact with individuals following placement in permanent housing is maintained for twelve – eighteen months and longer if needed. Connection to in-house services and to area providers is initiated immediately in order to encourage engagement in stabilizing treatment. The Social Work / Case Management Team successfully collaborate in order to address the totality of need and provide intensive support in order to have a positive impact.

Case Management staff work with an extensive landlord database and are continually looking to improve and expand such relationships. The Agency has observed the effectiveness of maintaining these strong, sustaining relationships with landlords in their efforts to house the chronically homeless. The primary responsibilities of the Housing Case Managers are homeless prevention, transitioning emergency shelter guests to permanent housing, rapid re-housing placement, and providing stabilizing aftercare.

Home Connections – Is a unique housing program in Schenectady. This program is designed to significantly reduce the length of time homeless individuals stay in emergency shelters. Agency Case Managers go into the community to engage homeless individuals in local shelters and motels in efforts to transition them to permanent housing and connect to appropriate services. Home Connections also promotes connection to medical and mental health care by working with the Social Work Department. The goal is to evaluate eligibility for Social Security benefits.

The March 2020 CARES Act allocated two rounds of Emergency Solutions Grant COVID-19 (ESG-CV) funds to states and cities across the United States of America. The Emergency Solutions Grant – COVID-19 program is designed to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus among individuals and families experiencing homelessness or receiving homeless assistance. The City of Schenectady and Schenectady County are entitlement grantees.

The Agency was approved for funding to support Emergency Shelter, Outreach, Rapid-Re-housing, and Eviction Prevention. In addition, the Agency was approved to provide Emergency Rental Assistance Program ERAP funding.

Case Managers met with landlords and individuals to apply for the ERAP, Rapid Re-housing, and Prevention funding. Case Managers provided support, referrals, and connections to critical services to stabilize individuals in need of the available funding.



Renee W-B., Intensive Case Manager.

How Case Management Works – Under the premise that no two people experience homelessness or manage crisis in the same way, Case Managers approach their work with sensitivity and respect for each person’s individuality. Meeting with a person to build trust and understanding of a mutual goal, while obtaining critical information begins the case management process.

An in-depth assessment is processed and a service plan with individualized goals and follow up is developed. The plan offers enrollment in the Representative Payee program for financial management, engagement with the in-house Social Work, Medical Care Program, and if appropriate enrollment in the Health Home program. This team wrap-around approach has proven to provide greater stability for the individual and increases their chance to successfully integrate into the community.

BH’s strong partnership with DSS has allowed for greater insight into the deficiencies of the service delivery system and has paved the way for improved relationships with other area agencies in the community. Barriers have been identified allowing greater communication to address the growing needs of the homeless population.

The Future of Case Management at Bethesda House –

The Case Management Supervisor will collaborate with area providers to conduct a comprehensive Tenant Education Program; the goal of this program is to assist clients in better understanding the responsibilities of being a tenant and to establish successful working relationships with their landlords. Tenant legal rights will be highlighted. This training will empower clients to improve communication with landlords, advocate for their rights, and cope with conflict.

“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

– St. Francis of Assisi



Ethan F., Intensive Case Manager, (L) and Rachel B., Case Management Supervisor (R).

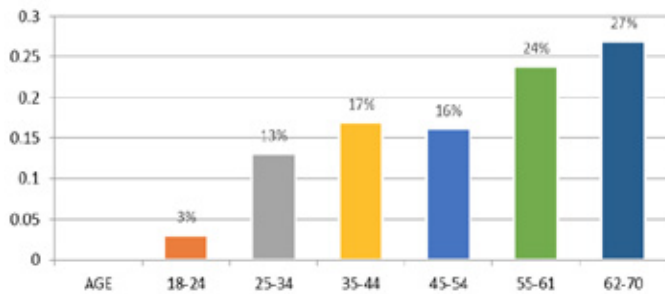


Agency Directors, Leina M. (L) and Crystal T. (R)

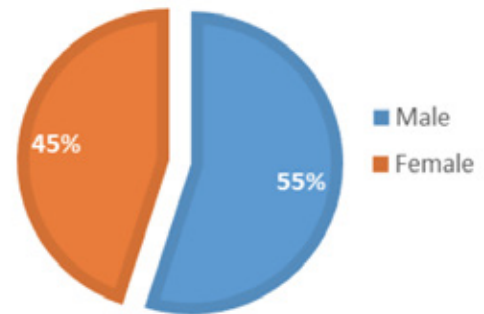


Case Management

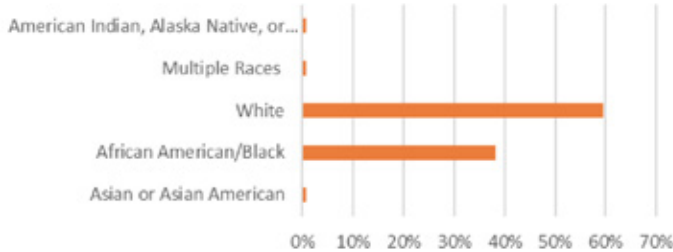
AGE



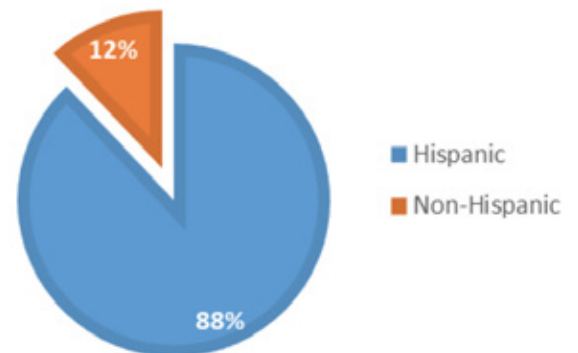
GENDER



RACE



ETHNICITY



Disability	% of Population
Development Disability	30%
Chronic Health	69%
Substance Use Disorder	55%
Mental Illness	91%
HIV/AIDS	3%
Physical Disability	58%

Number of Conditions	
1 Condition	26.47%
2 Conditions	29.41%
3+ Conditions	44.11%

Neighborhood	
Central State Street	26.5%
Downtown	18.2%
Hamilton Hill	31.2%
Mt. Pleasant	16.1%
North Schenectady	1.8%
Union Street	6.2%

Services

- Stabilize emergencies
- Reduce obstacles
- Access to community resources
- Referrals to area providers
- Emergency placement
- Permanent housing
- Rapid Re-housing
- On-going support
- Wrap around services



Social Work Program Purpose – The Program offers Clinical Case Management and Supportive Counseling to the Disenfranchised, Impoverished and Homeless Individuals of Schenectady County.

Services Offered:

Walk-in Hospitality Center – There is a dedicated space available daily to the public. Individuals in the community can walk in between the hours of 9 - 4:30, Monday through Friday for respite, access to basic needs, and assistance with emergency services. If the individual agrees, they will be connected with in-house or community resources. Social Work services are offered to those walking in and seeking support or advocacy.

Outreach Case Management – the Street Outreach Case Management program was implemented in 2018. The Outreach staff primarily work in the community providing food, clothing, connection to area providers, and transportation. The Outreach Case Manager worked to establish a strong relationship and line of communication to provide basic living needs, but with the intention to address the factors contributing to homelessness. Outreach Case Manager introduced support, information sharing, crisis management, and advocacy and education on pertinent

services. As appropriate, Outreach staff will bring a person or persons to the Agency to meet with Case Management or Social Work staff.

Medical Services – Due to COVID-19 restrictions Ellis Medical Center's Resident Doctors were not on-site. Agency Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner triaged the need and proceeded appropriately. This service was offered to Bethesda House guests, residents, and individuals who walked-in from the community.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner – The Bethesda House PNP Program provides Psychiatric services onsite twice a week. Those referred to the PNP Program will also meet with a Social Worker who screens for services and provides a comprehensive treatment plan. The PNP will complete a thorough Psychiatric evaluation and provide treatment as appropriate. Social Work staff work with the PNP to assist in connecting to additional services and provide case management and consistent supportive counseling.

Health Home – Bethesda House became a Care Management Agency in 2019. The Program's Care Coordinators provide case management services and work diligently to connect clients to medical and mental health services while addressing Social Determinants of Health.

The Health Home staff work closely with the Case Management and Social Work departments and coordinates closely with community providers. Bethesda House has committed resources such as transport services in order to maximize the positive impact of the program.

CASAC Program – Bethesda House oversees the Certified Alcohol Substance Abuse Counselor Services at Schenectady DSS. The CASAC's are responsible for providing Substance Use Disorder evaluations and determining treatment needs for those applying for Temporary Assistance. Following the initial evaluation, CASAC's are responsible to maintain contact with the treatment providers to ensure that clients are complying with recommendations. Ongoing monitoring and case management is provided. Evaluation and treatment outcomes are provided to DSS Examiners in order for them to maintain their records and correspondence with TA applicants. Though based at Schenectady DSS, CASAC's do refer and connect individuals to services offered at Bethesda House, often making referrals to in-house Social Work and housing Case Management services.

Medical/Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Care – The population accessing services at Bethesda House consistently present issues related to Significant Mental Illness, Substance Use, Trauma, and untreated Chronic Health Conditions. The Social Work and Case Management Staff are dedicated to engaging individuals in all means of support in order to assess the needs of individuals and provide guidance and information in order to connect to services and community providers. Staff have established strong relationships with community agencies/programs such as Project Safe Point, Ellis Hospital, New Choices, Ellis Mental Health Clinic, and Schenectady DSS in order to best serve the population and have an impact. A main component of the service is that individuals often interact with Social Work staff quite frequently. Shelter guest and Drop-in Center guests are able to see staff on a daily basis. This intense support allows for greater engagement and effectiveness.

How Social Work, Works – We believe that it begins with valuing the individual's experience, choices, and priorities. Meeting the individual 'where they are at' and listening to what

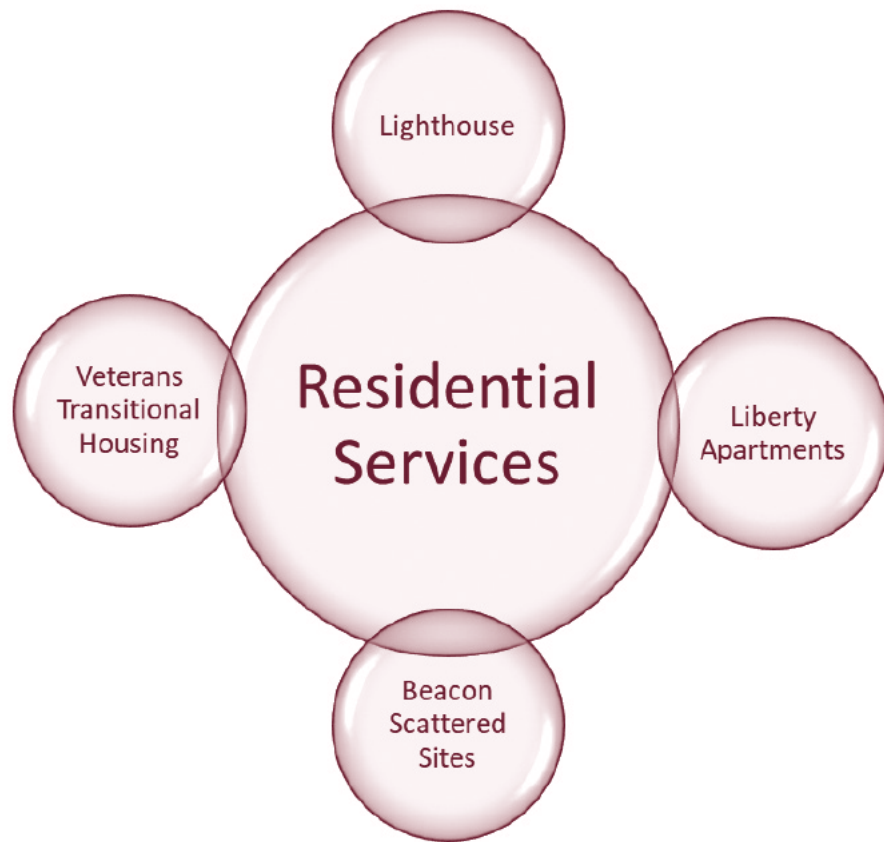
is important to them is the process of engagement for us. Being available to address a need or problem in the moment and building trust is a key component of how Social Work staff operate. Staff hold the belief that individuals have a desire to and the ability to change that which is causing them distress. Social Workers further believe that sabotaging incidents and behaviors are a response to a physical and/or psychological pain or condition. Staff foremost offer comfort care and safety, thus cultivating further opportunities for treatment to begin. Staff want clients to experience and remember Bethesda House as a place to return to when in need. Bethesda House finds value in working and collaborating with each other and area human resource agencies for the common good and safety of the individual and the greater community.

The Future of Social Work at Bethesda House – Social Work staff will continue to be a bridge and safety net for individuals disconnected from life stabilizing services and supports. The overarching goal is to expand to provide and strengthen existing programs that have proven effective with the population. We will be expanding the Health Home program by adding staff which allows us to reach and provide services to more members. In our experience, Outreach Case Management staff are critical in reaching the outliers, we have experienced that the people that are in encampments are skeptical of services.

We see the need to have 7-days a week Social Work services. Crisis does not start on Monday and end on Friday. Our staff have worked on weekends and experienced people in need. Increasing the Social Work hours to include weekends is a future goal. Due to the increase in need of Medical Care and PNP programs, we are working to increase the availability of these services.



Linda F., Care Coordinator, (L) and Rachael C., Quality Assurance Supervisor (R).



Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. This model is at the core of all services Bethesda House provides and directly implemented in 2002 when the Agency's first residential program began operations.

Residential Department Purpose – The four residential programs are permanent supportive housing programs for chronically homeless single adults. It is a model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals lead more stable lives.

Services Offered:

Permanent Supportive Housing – Chronically Homeless, single adults are housed first then work with residential staff to create an Individualized Service Plan (ISP). Continued housing placement is not contingent of following the ISP.

Harm Reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences and is built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. Staff are non-judgmental and will work with individuals providing services and resources in order to assist them in stabilization or on their path to sobriety.

Life Skills – services provides opportunities to develop functional everyday life skills such as self-care, vocational, money management, self-advocacy, and independence.

Money Management – Residents who are on SSI/SSD are encouraged to participate in the Agency's Representative Payee program which is designed to assist in money management. In 2020-2021, 40% of residents participate in the program.

Support Services – Liberty Apartments and the Lighthouse programs are staffed 24/7. Residents interact with staff on a regular basis; Beacon residents interact with staff at least weekly. One-on-one meetings are designed to focus on each resident giving them full attention. During scheduled meetings, the discussions between staff and residents focus on progress towards goals, immediate concerns, and any modifications to their existing service plan. All residents have access to the Agency's Social Work, Medical Care, and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner services. Residents engage and connect with our Health Home programs, Care Coordinators to ensure their medical and mental health needs are met.

Day Program- Drop-in Center – All residents have access to the Agency’s essential and basic living needs services such as daily meal, food pantry, clothing room, hygiene kit program, and facilitators.

How the Residential Department Works:

The Agency has 3 specific residential programs, Liberty Apartments which has 16 beds, the Lighthouse which has 7 PSH beds and 3 transitional beds for Veterans, and the Beacon which has 8-scattered site apartments.

Staff meet bi-monthly to review issues that affect programming and staffing. The Director and Assistant Director regularly attend the Single Point of Access (SPOA) meetings which provide a setting to:

- Identify residents’ needs
- Seek community services
- Build accountability to the treatment plan among service providers
- Develop treatment recommendations and review medications
- Develop social / vocational / employment goals
- Address representative payee issues
- Create personal goals and objectives
- Seek input and evaluation on employment and / or vocational options
- Review all mainstream benefits
- Review and discuss options to assist residents in obtaining independence and self-sufficiency.

The design of the program allows for greater autonomy, but most residents seek interaction with their resident neighbors, our Day Program population, and general staff members. In addition, ninety-five percent (95%) of the residents have developed their goals for their service plans with the Director of Residential Services.

Obtaining secure and stable housing is the first step in alleviating the lifestyle affects and trauma associated with living on the streets. It takes a great deal of time for a homeless person to let go of street life and to trust that they are worthy of their new life. With each step forward, there can be several steps back, but with patience and persistence, no goal is out of reach.

Residents actively participate in social activities and most thoroughly enjoy each others company. It is refreshing to see over seventy percent of the residents engage in various activities such as Women’s and Men’s Group, movie theater trips, nutrition classes, grocery shopping, community events at local congregations, and on-site events.

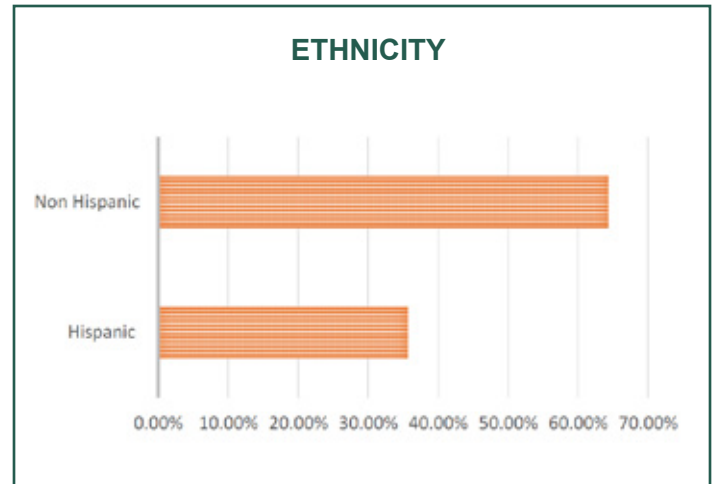
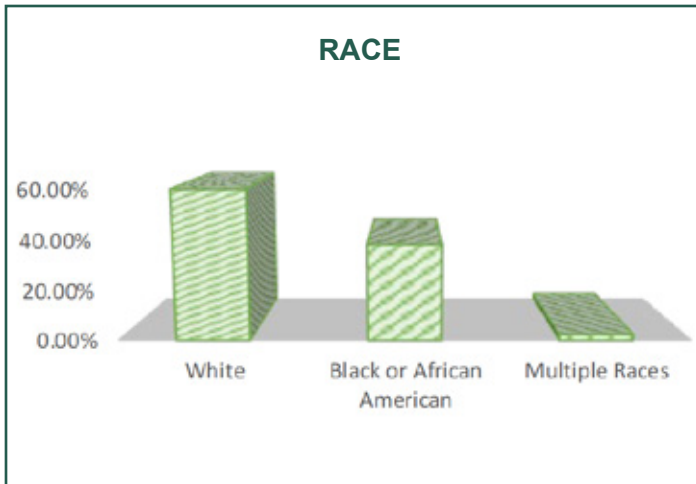
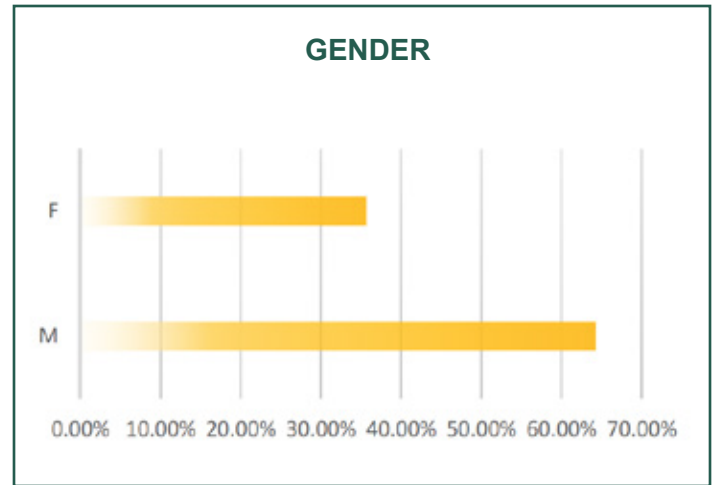
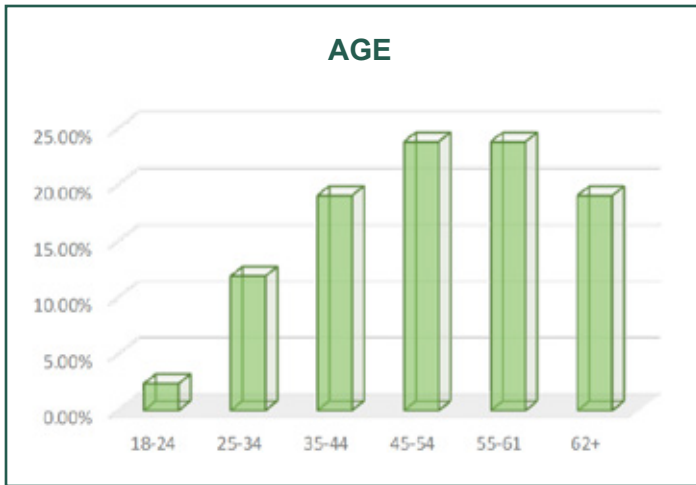
The Future of the Residential Program

Within our current residential programs, we will expand our current multifaceted activities, such as outings, fun community meals, trips to museums, and seasonal activities that will act like springboards to help residents move forward and develop skillful ways to communicate and manage anxiety. The Agency will further develop the resident volunteer program and encourage residents to sign up for volunteer programs in the community.

Bethesda House is approved for a new construction, capital project. The residential program will increase from 34 beds to 60 permanent supportive housing beds.



Residential Programs



Number of Conditions	
1 Condition	30.95%
2 Conditions	23.81%
3+ Conditions	45.24%

Disability	% of Residents, Based on 31 Residents
Development Disability	21.95%
Chronic Health	29.27%
Substance Use Disorder	43.90%
Mental Illness	87.80%
HIV/AIDS	0%
Physical Disability	36.59%

Capital Project: Cara House



Bethesda House received approval from NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Homeless Housing and Assistance Program for a capital project, Cara House. Following years of research, planning, and development, Bethesda House Administration, the Agency Board of Directors, and the Capital Project Development Team worked undeterred to see this project come to fruition.

Cara means caring, friend in the Celtic language. Back in the seventies, when the community mental health movement was with an emphasis on returning people to the community after long-term hospitalizations, it was clear people did not have a place to go. Ms. Patty Gosinski started a social club, which offered people an opportunity to engage first with each other, then the community. Ms. Gosinski needed a name for the club. A friend and colleague, Dr. Louis Byrne, from Ireland, suggested the name Cara Club. The spirit of Cara Club, a friendly space to be with others, was engaging and embraced by staff, volunteers, and the community it served. It is this mission and purity of intent that Bethesda House's new residential program takes the name Cara, as the residential setting and programming are based on a caring and welcoming environment, invoking respect and dignity with our clients.

The current services and programs that Bethesda House proper offers will continue.

Cara House is new construction located at 917 State Street, it will be 23,906 square feet, 0.14 miles east from Bethesda House's main location at 834 State Street. Twenty-six (26) efficiency units, located on the second and third floors will be permanent supportive housing. Sixteen beds, on the first floor are emergency shelter (ES) beds. The design of the shelter includes 6 efficiency units, which we

intend to use for medical respite beds; there will be 5 additional rooms each with 2 emergency shelter beds, and sharing 2 bathrooms with showers that are located in a common space.

At Cara House, there is a Medical Care office with an exam room and a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner's office. An Intensive Case Manager (ICM) is dedicated to the ES program with additional ICMs dedicated to the PHS program. There will also be Social Worker and Education programs.

The physical and programmatic design of Cara House is unique in Schenectady County, offering housing and emergency services to the medically fragile, chronically homeless, and the re-entry population that experience the greatest challenges in returning to the community. Cara House will require close collaborations with Schenectady DSS, Schenectady Dept. of Parole/Probation, Re-Entry Task force, Ellis Hospital, and other area medical service providers. Cara House is the natural evolution in serving the homeless in Schenectady County. The program was designed after years of experience and research. Cara House will offer innovative approaches to address the challenges of the homeless population.

Anticipated opening is September 2022.

Thank You

Schenectady County

City of Schenectady

Wright Family Foundation

**The Neil and Jane, William and Estelle
Golub Family Foundation**

Carlilian Foundation

The Arnold Cogswell Foundation

The Schenectady Foundation

Looking Back

Thank you to our Volunteers and Community Supporters!

We are humbled by the generous gifts to our soup kitchen from – **St. Kateri Takawitha Parish Church, Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Josephs of Glenville, Immanuel Lutheran, Our Lady of Fatima, Grace Lutheran Church** – who provide delicious sandwiches for our daily meal, emergency shelter, and street outreach.

AllTowne Fresh and **Global Partners** have supported our food programs with delicious and healthy meals from their Erie Boulevard location. During the holiday season they donated profits from the sale of their signature sandwiches and supplied us with PPE and cleaning supplies.

It is with our deepest gratitude, that through our continued partnership with **Concern for The Hungry, The Food Pantries of the Capital District** and **the Schenectady County Food Providers**, we are able to receive thousands of pounds of non-perishable food and funds for our food programs.

The Guilderland Elks, Lodge 2480, thank you for hosting a coat drive for Bethesda House and for your generous donation. Your commitment to brotherhood and community was felt by our guests and residents.

Bethesda House was able to maintain our engagement with our donors through multiple virtual events, from live music and raffles at our **Fall Fundraiser** – thank you to **Joe “Sinatra” Kriss, Carla Page** and **The Northside Sound** for donating your time and talents to our event.

Union College students have supported Bethesda House in many ways. Each year during orientation, students sign up for their annual day of service. Students come to the Agency and help with seasonal work or building projects. Students participate in sandwich making brigades and work in our Soup Kitchen.

The Agency’s holiday meals are always filled with camaraderie and great food! Thank you to our wonderful Board members and community supporters who donated Turkeys and baked goods.

The Agency was proud to be a part of **Rivers Resort and Casino’s Holiday Trees of Hope**. Bethesda House staff beautifully decorated a Christmas tree that was on display for the community to see and vote on. Rivers also supports the agency with food and hygiene supply donations throughout the year – **Thank you Rivers!!**

In February **Mohawk Honda** held a **HUGE** food drive and we were blessed with hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items for our Soup Kitchen and our two food pantries!!

Both, **SEFCU** and **CDPHP**, put words into action with substantial monetary support to our programs this past year. Thank you for continuing to meet the needs of the community!

Thank you, **Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Women’s Club** for your ongoing support. Your continuous donations of hygiene products, household goods, and clothing are deeply appreciated by our guests.

We had a great turn out for our spring **Bingo for Bethesda** event; an evening of BINGO from the comfort of home.

SUNY’s Got Your Back is a program that offers comfort care bags to Domestic Abuse and Homeless Shelters across the state. Bethesda is blessed to receive shipments of these bags throughout the year. These bags are filled with all the necessities our guests need.

Thank you to **Quick Response** for donating your services to Bethesda House!! You have helped us keep our guests, residents and staff safe and healthy!!

We ushered in 2021 with our new logo which represents **change, evolution** and **innovation**. Our new logo brings a new mindset and commitment to serve. Bethesda House remains dedicated to our mission and over the past year we have expanded our emergency shelter program, modified our food programs, and collaborated with area providers; ensuring a seamless delivery of essential services.

Financial Summary

Bethesda House's 2020-2021 fiscal year ended strong with an operating surplus and overall increase in our contributed support. Due to the pandemic and the need for social distancing, Bethesda House had virtual fundraisers.

Contribution dollars allow our agency to enhance and increase the services we provide to the homeless and impoverished citizens of Schenectady County. We are deeply grateful to have received generous donations from long-term donors, The COINS Foundation, The Edward D. Cammarota Foundation, Inc., SEFCU Foundation, Ladies of Charity Schenectady Vicariate, Golub Family Foundation, Inc., First Reformed Church of Schenectady, Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, St. Kateri Takawitha Parish Church, and The Community Foundation.

Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.

Kimarie Sheppard
Executive Director

Leina Minakawa
Director of Clinical, Case Management, & Essential Services

Crystal Thatcher
Director of Residential Services

“*Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.*”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr





834 State Street
Schenectady, New York 12307
(518) 374-7873
www.bethesdaHS.org