

BETHESDA HOUSE OF
SCHENECTADY, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-
2015





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

House of Mercy.

834 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12307, (518) 374-7873

www.bethesdahouseschenectady.org

Chronically homeless means constantly homeless; it means repeatedly homeless.

-Linda Lingle



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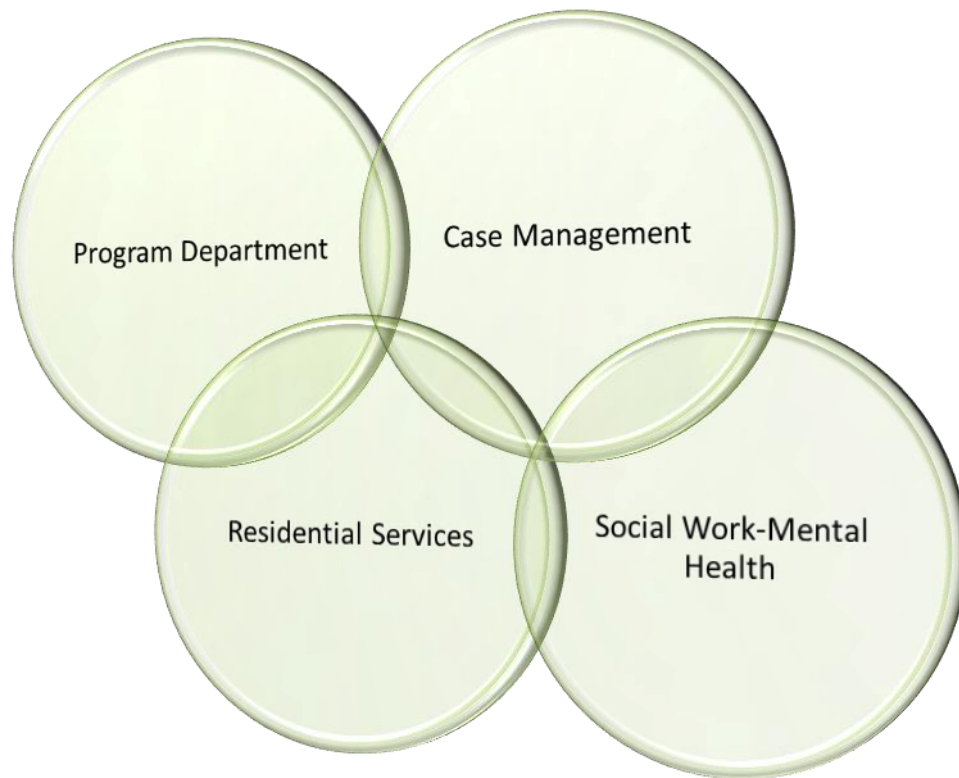
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Special Thanks

The administration of Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. gratefully acknowledges the work of its Directors and staff responsible for providing and gathering data and information necessary 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.

Bethesda House at a Glance



Consumers Served

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

Guests Served	Total
Guests	54,131
Unduplicated Guests Receiving Services	4,100
First Time Guests	2,925
Homeless Guests	3,494

Program Department Services	Total
Consumer Choice Food Pantry	28,117
Clothing Room	2,715
Showers	294
Telephone	4,643
Hygiene Kits	675
Mailboxes ¹	41,869
Daily Meal	40,397
Laundry	389
Lockers	832

The numbers reflect cumulative totals of services provided.

Case Management Services	Total
Housing, Permanent, and Emergency	1,938
Representative Payee	2,935
Case Management Services	1,285
Emergency Services	237
Referred for Income	642
Secured Income	304
Social Work	4,576

The numbers reflect cumulative totals of scheduled appointments.

Residential Services	Total
Lighthouse	22
Liberty Apartments	18

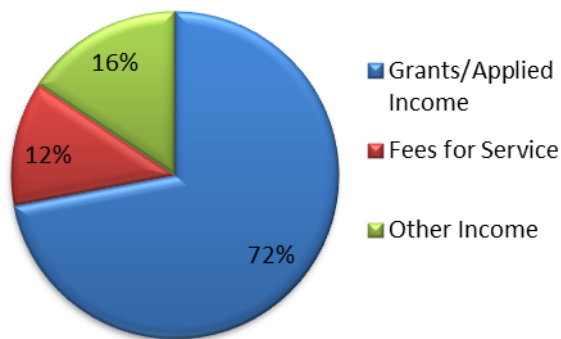
- Consumers were referred to the agency from **16** area providers. One thousand and eighty (**1,080**) referrals were made for the following services: **690** Case Management, **310** Emergency Services, and **80** Residential Services.
- Case Management and Program staff referred **304** consumers to area providers to best meet the needs of the individuals.

¹ 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; 95% utilization rate

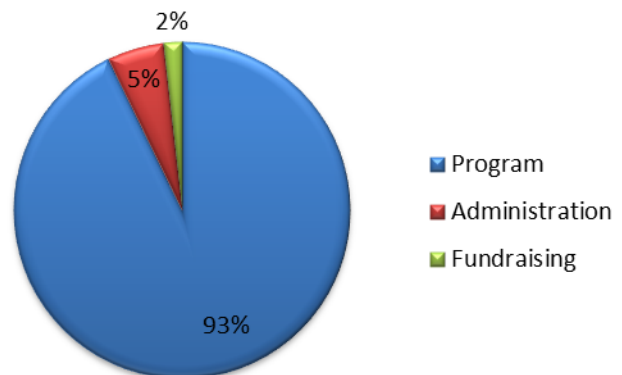
Revenue & Expenses

Revenue	Amount	Expense	Amount
Grants/Applied Income for Operations	896,881	Program	1,331,493
Fees for Service	153,543	Administration	77,884
Other Income	195,147	Fundraising	25,897
Total Revenues	1,245,571	Total Expense	1,435,274

Revenue



Expense



In-kind & Volunteers

Volunteer Hours	\$7,658
Value of Volunteer Hours	\$214,488
Value of Donated Items	\$273,026

Introduction

The 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, 2014 to June 30, 2015. 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 2014-2015. 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.

During the 2014-15 funding year, the total number of guests that were served increased 10% over the previous year. This increase is indicative of our continued struggling economy; our experience is that the face of homelessness and working poor has changed to include people who were once economic contributors. We continue to meet with individuals who, for the first time in their lives, need assistance. People who lost their jobs and exhausted their savings and unemployment benefits walked through our doors in search of help.

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. As an agency whose mission is "an interfaith ministry to the homeless, disabled, and economically disadvantaged citizens of Schenectady County, building a just, hospitable, and inclusive community one person at a time by affirming the dignity and addressing the needs of each guest entering this 'House of Mercy,'" success takes on a much more subjective and individualized dimension than mere conformity to given policy objectives. If our consumers report that they are feeling more hopeful about the future, more prepared to deal with life's adversities, and more able to care 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 four service dimensions of the agency from our Program Department: Day Shelter/Emergency Services, Case Management, Social Work – Mental Health, and Residential Services.

- Bethesda House's Program Department is comprised of a variety of individual services that meet the needs of Schenectady City's and County's homeless and working poor population. Those services include the Day Shelter (drop-in center) and Emergency/Essential Services. The goal of these combined programs is to provide crisis management, harm reduction, and stabilization in the lives of the individuals who are experiencing the harshness and difficulties of life and are hopeful to find guidance out of their despair.

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

- The Case Management Department provides a variety of services to the homeless and to those who are at risk of becoming homeless. The goal for each homeless individual who walks through our door is first to manage the crisis and then to move toward the overall goal of moving individuals out of the cycle of homelessness and poverty. All Case Managers are available to any guest who finds their-self in need of our emergency/essential services. Case Managers complete an initial assessment to determine the needs of our guests and to offer the appropriate services including, but not limited to: counseling, guidance, assistance with basic needs through our Day Program/Emergency Services Department, referrals to other agencies for drug and alcohol addiction

treatment, referrals for mental health treatment, as well as networking with other agencies to provide services that Bethesda House does not provide. Case Managers can also assist a guest with rental and/or utility assistance and employment assistance.

The Case Management Department has more than one contract source. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the City of Schenectady, NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA)'s Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP), NYS OMH through Schenectady County, United Way, and private donors support the services offered by this department.

- In January 2014, Bethesda House implemented our Social Work Department, which provides mental health services to the agency's guests and residents. Our Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and support staff process intakes, assessments, and referrals to area mental health providers. Long-term counseling and support is available.
- Bethesda House's Residential Department has made a commitment to honor and uphold the mission of Bethesda House. Staff work diligently with residents to overcome life challenges and help provide a safe, comfortable, and welcoming home for everyone to enjoy and find solace.

The agency's Lighthouse Program's seven beds and Liberty Apartment's sixteen beds are permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless adults with a history of untreated, severe, and persistent mental illness and other disabling conditions. Both residences follow the Housing First model, which is to provide 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. We provide advocacy, housing, and a safety net for our residents. Staff address the needs of the whole person focusing on self-respect, personal growth, and discovery of an individual's gifts.

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 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) NYSSHP, Veterans Administration, and private donors support the services offered by this department.

Bethesda House ministers to a vulnerable, diverse, and time-demanding 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
- Single Point of Access
- Evictions Task Force
- Dual Recovery Task Force
- Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence
- Schenectady County Re-entry Task Force
- Schenectady Food Providers
- Homeless Veterans
- Homeless Services Planning Board
- Mental Health Sub-committee

Bethesda House has a variety of linkage agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) throughout the professional community.

Linkage Agreements:

The Alliance for Positive Health
The Center for Community Justice
Catholic Charities AIDS Services
Healthy Schenectady Families
Legal Aid Society of NENY
New Choices Recovery
Center Office of Fair Housing
SAFE Inc. of Schenectady
Schenectady County DSS
Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP)
Schenectady Home Town Health Center
Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority (SMHA)
Sexual Assault Support Services of PPMH
The YMCA of Schenectady



William, a volunteer

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU):

Ellis Hospital Department of Psychiatry
Ellis Hospital: Care Central
The YWCA of Schenectady
Schenectady County Re-entry Task Force
Cornell University Cooperative Extension
The City Mission
Peter Young: Housing, Industry, & Treatment

The Management Team is fully invested in the freedom to be creative in pioneering useful solutions to implement positive changes within the agency. In addition, the team 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.

Once again, the staff and administration of the agency wishes 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. Thank you!

Program Department



Bethesda House's Program Department's Day Shelter (drop-in center) serves the vulnerable and homeless population including the hard-to-serve individuals who have been barred from other agencies due to substance abuse, unwillingness to enter or continue with treatment programs, mental health concerns, anger management concerns, or other emotional and mental concerns, which resulted in an unfavorable status.

The Day Shelter provides a unique entryway into the Continuum of Care where a wide range of services can be accessed. Services include: Drop-In for the homeless and working poor, a safe haven social setting for adults with a disabling condition, daily community meal (Soup Kitchen), referrals to other community agencies, storage lockers, mailboxes, laundry, shower, telephone, fax, hygiene kits, clothing room, and client choice food pantry. Several outside facilitators have been recruited to provide on-site expertise in a variety of programs. Bethesda House staff also run programs and workshops along with outside facilitators such as: Landlord/Tenant Training, Women's Support Group, Safety Counts, HIV testing and education, Schenectady DOH Flu Vaccine clinics and PPD testing, National Grid Consumer Advocate, blood pressure clinics, and nutrition outreach and education.

The Day Shelter is well-known on the streets as a safe place and is often the first, and many times, the only connection that chronically homeless persons have to any system of care; it opens the door to forging trust and building relationships with the hardest to serve members in our community. The Day Shelter provides much the same function as a street outreach team. This program is the primary point of referral and entry into Bethesda House's twenty-three units of permanent supportive housing and three units of transitional housing for veterans.

This department is led by the Program Director who works closely with the Day Program Coordinator, the Senior Housing/Outreach Case Manager, and the Representative Payee Case Manager. Together they work closely with the Director of Residential Services and the Director of Property and Facility Operations. This approach maximizes efficiency as staff members navigate their way through daily interactions with our consumers.

Our food pantry is open two days a month, and our ongoing nutrition education program offers guidance and support by teaching our guests how to stretch food stamp "dollars" and supplement with local food pantries. During 2014-2015, Bethesda House experienced a 23% increase in daily meal attendance and a 19% increase in food pantry usage over 2013-2014. This is an alarming trend that all surrounding area pantries seem to be experiencing. The Program Department is working in close collaboration with Concern for the Hungry and the Regional Food Bank to address the rising number of families and individuals suffering from food insecurity and scarcity.

The Program Department continues to offer an on-going, six-week nutrition program designed to provide nutritional education for our day population and residents. Agency and Cornell Cooperative Extension staff teach a wide range of basic nutritional information from menu planning and healthy food selections to meal preparation. How to stretch food stamp dollars and accessing local food pantries to supplement their meals is a critical component of this education.

The Clothing Room continues to allow guests and residents to move about freely and see the wide variety of clothing selections. We have moved our professional clothing to a separate location in order to provide appropriate clothing for job interviews, proper functions, and any event that requires a step above casual attire. In keeping with our commitment to provide a safe haven for single adults, Bethesda House forged a partnership with Things of My Very Own, an organization that serves underprivileged children. This has proven to be a wonderful partnership and has benefited a significant number of families. The Agency's free clothing room is available on an emergency basis thanks to the generosity of our community. Our clothing room volunteers assist guests who need clothing for new employment, special occasions, and significant events.

Bethesda House has also partnered with local justice officials to provide opportunities for those convicted of a crime to complete community service hours and receive on-the-job training. In addition to obtaining job skills, the participants are educated in social responsibility and offered assistance in career path planning.

The Program Department holds staff meetings twice a month to review issues that impact programming and staffing. A House Meeting held once a month includes guests, residents, and staff. During these meetings a variety of topics are covered: non-violence within the agency and in the community, guest issues, respect for others and the building, self-respect, community presentation, and the agency's smoking policy. Potential changes for the Agency are discussed at House Meetings. Guests and residents are encouraged to voice the changes that they would like to see and submit comments and/or suggestions in our Suggestion Box.

Day Shelter and Emergency/Essential Services include referrals, consumer choice food pantry, emergency food pantry, clothing room, telephone, mailboxes, laundry, showers, lockers, computer use, daily meal, crisis management, and a safe haven. Individuals from the community are unconditionally welcomed in our Hospitality Center to interact with other guests, access emergency services, or to simply find a safe place to sleep and have their basic needs met.

The availability of phones and computers has allowed numerous people the opportunity to access emails, arrange for job interviews, and follow up on phone calls to the Social Security Administration and Schenectady County's Department of

Social Services for benefits and monthly cash assistance. Bus passes are available to assist individuals with transportation for job interviews and medical appointments. Having these emergency services available is a significant component in our effort to prevent homelessness for families and single individuals.

Bethesda House continues to improve our methods of data collection in order to create systems that capture accurate statistical information helping to identify areas of need not being addressed and to identify where there is a need to increase specific services.

The Directors continue to work with area congregations to increase our volunteer pool and promote community involvement. We 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. When there is a need, the community responds.

When crisis struck the City of Schenectady on March 6, 2015, the community came together. Staff, hearing the news in the early morning hours, immediately rolled up their shirt sleeves and began preparing for the masses of displaced fire victims that would find their way to Bethesda House in search of comfort, services, and housing.

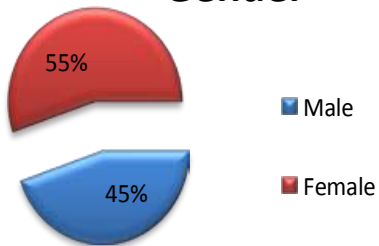
The frigid air temperatures wrapped around the fire victims as they struggled to find understanding of and reason for the tragedies of that night. At Bethesda House, they were greeted with a hot cup of coffee and staff that had quickly put together items needed to get them through the initial days after the fire. Our Case Management/Social Work/Program Department team performed triage in the Hospitality Center. Case Management staff created lists of available apartments so individuals would spend minimal time in the emergency shelters that opened throughout the City and minimize the amount of time victims would be displaced by this tragic event. The Jay Street fire was a devastating event for the City, but for Bethesda House staff it was a personal tragedy as well. Several victims who lost their lives or were severely injured in the fire were previously housed by our case management team in the two buildings that burned to the ground. Individuals that had previously been homeless and were working their way back to self-sufficiency and self-respect were now gone. Bethesda House, The Schenectady Foundation, and several community agencies collaborated to replace the material goods lost in the fire and to rehouse individuals as quickly as possible, but the spirit of the victims would not be so easily fixed. Our Social Worker, along with the Office of Mental Health, continues to work with the victims of the Jay Street fire. The experience left a profound imprint on our community. Simultaneously, the collaboration with area providers and the reliance on co-workers strengthened the agency's commitment to honor and protect the dignity of those we serve.



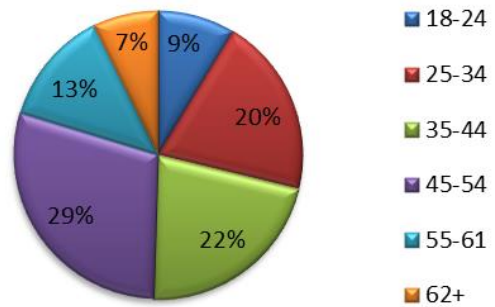
Jake, Food and Nutrition Coordinator

Program Department Demographics

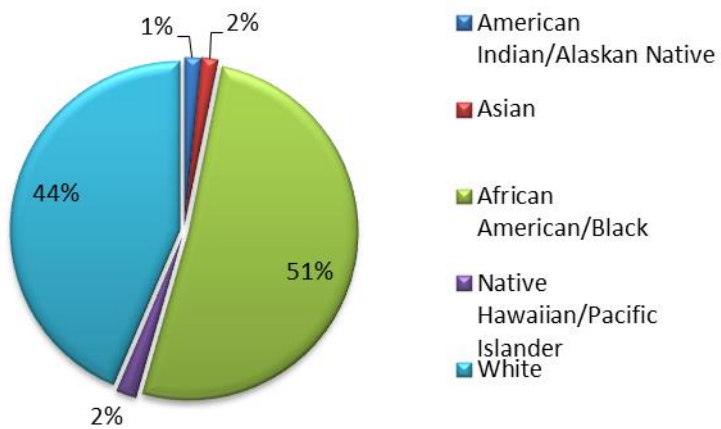
Gender



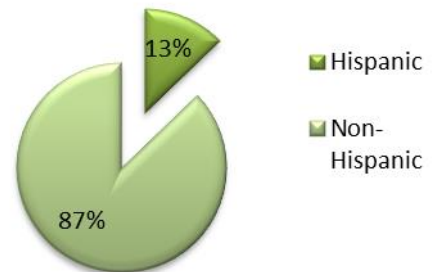
Age



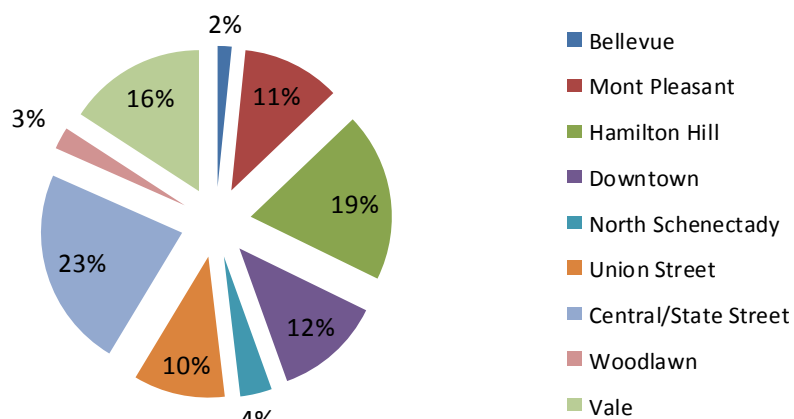
Race



Ethnicity



Neighborhood



Day Shelter/Emergency Services Stories

The C. family has been regular users of basic living and emergency services at BH for several years. They participated in several classes that Bethesda House offers but it wasn't until a diagnosis of diabetes, in addition to a history of hypertension and obesity that made the family realize they were in trouble and needed help. The Day Program Coordinator spoke with the family to determine how the agency could assist. It was just their luck that on that very day, a nutrition class was scheduled. That class led to a life-changing experience for the entire family. The C. family has always spent their food stamps and a significant portion of their meager social security checks on convenience store foods and takeout. When asked to think about why the family didn't cook, the response was immediate: the prospect of planning, cooking and shopping for food was extremely overwhelming and they had no idea where to begin. This insight sparked discussion among other participants in the class who had been unable to articulate their difficulties with food and preparation. At the end of the eight week class, each member of the C. family had dropped at least one pant size and they remained enthusiastic about committing to the healthy habits they adopted since the first class. They continue to meet regularly with the Food and Nutrition Coordinator, to get new recipes and information on spices that can be used in place of salt. The father shared with the Day Program Coordinator recently that his hypertension medication was decreased and he had lost thirty-eight pounds since taking the class. He also reported similar results for the rest of his family. The C. family is very excited about all they have learned and they are planning to take the nutrition class again the next time it is offered.

SM came to Bethesda House looking for a suit and left with a spring in his step and hope of a future. His friend Jimmy, with whom he had shared the streets for the past six years, suddenly passed away leaving SM alone and terrified for his life. The volunteer that assisted SM in the clothing room realized that a suit was the least of his needs and went to get a case manager. SM was led to the Case Manager's office, where he spent the next hour telling the story of his tragic life. After his mother died, SM, at the age of fourteen, was kicked out of his home by a stepfather who would "not tolerate no retards" in his house. He spent the next six years going from relative to relative, never feeling a sense of permanency or love; he just felt different, and that everyone saw him as what his stepfather repeatedly said he was. All that changed when he met Jimmy. Jimmy took SM under his wing and showed him how to live on the streets and while SM never knew where he would sleep or get his next meal, he felt very loved and protected; a feeling SM had not known since his mother died. SM has since moved into his own apartment and is trying to get a part-time job while he waits to hear from the Social Security Administration for disability approval. SM volunteers at Bethesda House twice a week and he frequently tells his story to other guests. SM's favorite part is how smart he feels the volunteers at Bethesda House are – how he came in looking for a suit and that he left with so much more. The clothing room volunteer took the time to listen to him and understood that he needed help in all areas of his life. SM decided to volunteer at Bethesda House so he can listen and learn and eventually become as smart as the other volunteers, although staff and volunteers assured SM that he is every bit as smart as the team.

Case Management Department



The Case Management Department is led by the Program Director who coordinates the team approach with the Day Program Coordinator and the Senior Housing/Outreach Case Manager. This team also works closely with the Residential Department to address the needs of our guests and residents.

Case Managers have been cross-trained to assist all people at risk of homelessness and/or in immediate need providing access to the Emergency/Essential Services that Bethesda House offers. The department meets once a month with program and residential staff to review issues that impact programming and staffing.

Case Management personnel cover the following needs:

Initial Intake and Assessment – triage and assessment of immediate needs, eligibility for entitlement programs, and the need for immediate referrals to other agencies.

Financial Case Management – managing the SSI/SSD benefits for disabled and identified guests. A budget is established with each person in our Rep Payee Program ensuring rent, utilities, food, medical care, and other essential needs are met and paid for before the guest receives a personal spending allowance.

Case Managers meet these needs through the following programs:

Shelter/Housing

The Case Management team provides emergency services to assist homeless individuals with emergency shelter placement. Guests can continue to work with Case Management to obtain steady income and permanent housing (subsidized or programmatic housing) or to obtain placement in Drug/Alcohol rehabilitation.

Bethesda House's Sr. Housing/Outreach Case Manager continues to increase landlord relationships to facilitate the placement of homeless people in safe and secure housing. This position's primary responsibilities include homelessness prevention, helping individuals obtain housing and rapid re-housing, and assisting homeless individuals with finding permanent housing. Many strong, on-going working relationships with landlords have been developed and have increased the outreach to house chronically homeless people. The Case Management staff has created an extensive landlord database, which aids in the success of securing affordable housing.

The staff assigned to the Program and Case Management department meet with individuals to assess emergency service needs and assist the same in navigating Bethesda House's intake system in order to obtain the appropriate services. We are seeing a significant need for emergency services by individuals and families that are at risk of homelessness. The number of individuals served by Bethesda House increased dramatically during the last fiscal year; this is directly related to the struggling, anemic economy. Bethesda House anticipates the growing demand to continue into the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The Representative Payee program

This program is essential in helping to prevent individuals from becoming homeless (assisting individuals in finding permanent housing), and aiding the financial stability of our consumers. Many individuals who do not participate in this program find themselves being taken advantage of by others and run the risk of losing their minimal income to drugs/alcohol and other addictions, due to their inability to handle and manage their monthly Social Security payment. The self-determination that people gain from living independently is remarkable. The average income of a participant is \$808 a month. Regardless of the amount, individuals are living on their own and not with family, in group homes, or having to share living quarters with someone who could possibly take advantage of them.

During the 2014-15 fiscal year, the number of participants in this program reached 79. The Case Management staff works closely with area providers, particularly with Schenectady County DSS Protective Services for Adults. The Case Manager works with each participant to develop a budget ensuring all bills (rent, utility, phone, medical, etc.) are paid in addition to allowing for "personal needs" money for necessities. During 2015-2016, Case Managers will continue to collaborate with the appropriate staff and local providers to ensure consumers secure housing placement and financial stability.

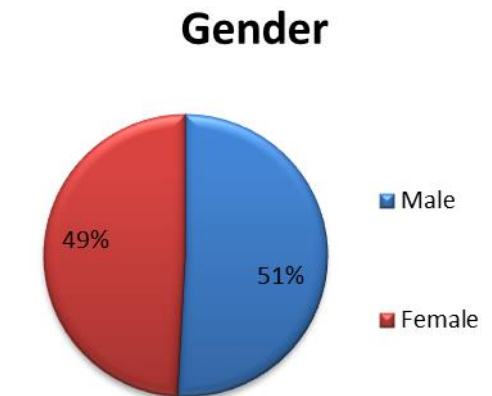
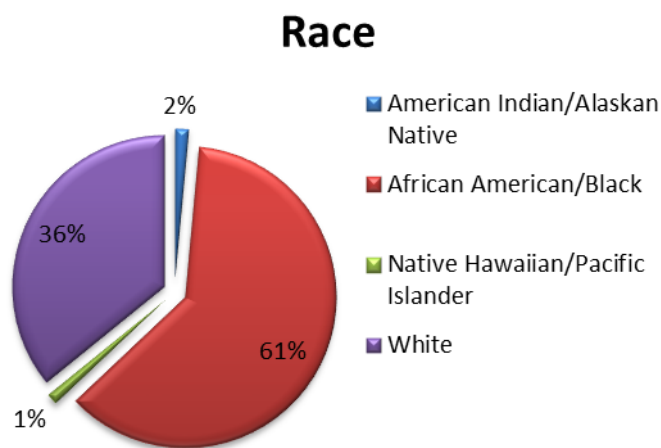
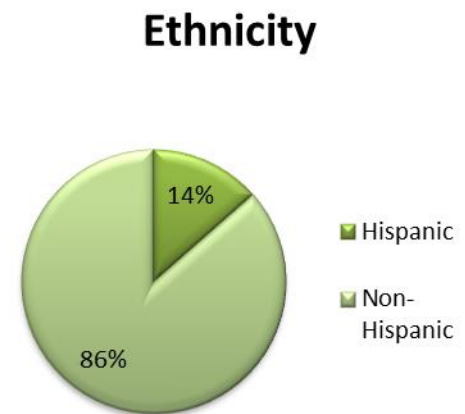
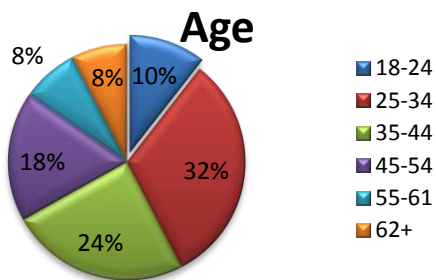
Consumer feedback gained at House Meetings has provided us with valuable information. In 2015-2016, we are implementing a consumer satisfaction survey to gain more insight on the effectiveness of the services we offer. Our goal is to ensure that consumers meet their milestones and that staff are mindful of the services the individuals are seeking. We will give careful review of the documentation we receive.

Social Work Program

The Social Work Program offers a unique approach to people who have severe, persistent, and untreated mental illness in Schenectady County. Our program uses the Housing First model for our homeless consumers. While in the process of obtaining housing, our social work staff process intakes and assessments and attempt to secure mental health treatment and other services that enable individuals to remain in permanent housing. The Social Work staff works closely with Case Management forming a cohesive team. The team wraps services around the consumer to achieve

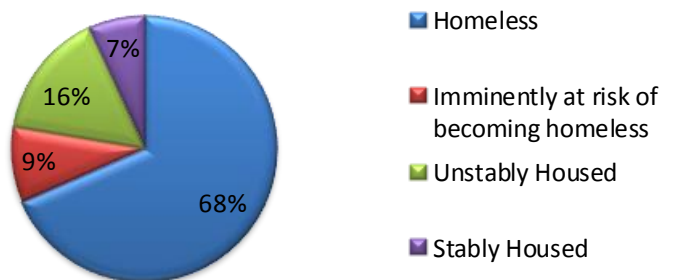
residential and income stability. Our Social Work staff counsel consumers and work with each to ensure that appropriate mental health services are obtained and regularly attended.

Housing and Crisis Case Management Services



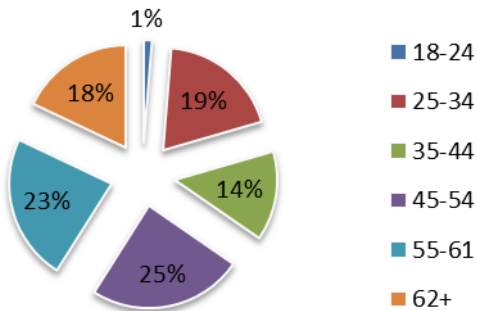
Disability	Percent of the Population We Serve
Mental Health	90%
Chronic Substance Abuse	52%
Chronic Health Concerns	30%
Developmental Disabilities	25%
Physical Disabilities	27%

Housing Status At Entry

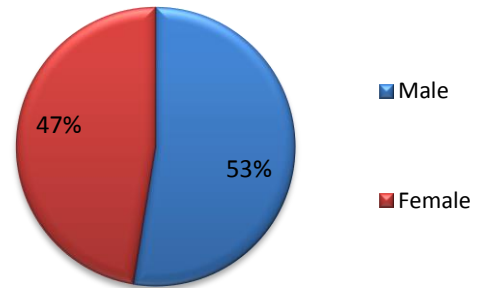


Case Management Representative Payee Services

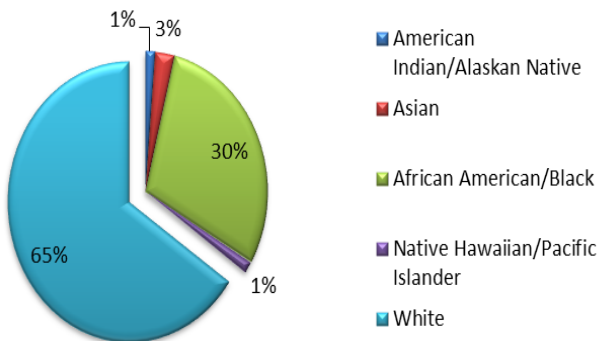
Age



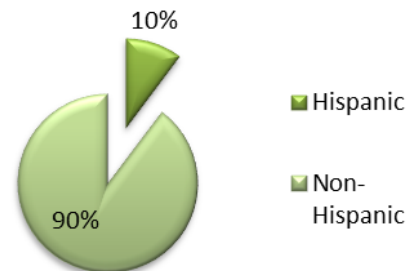
Gender



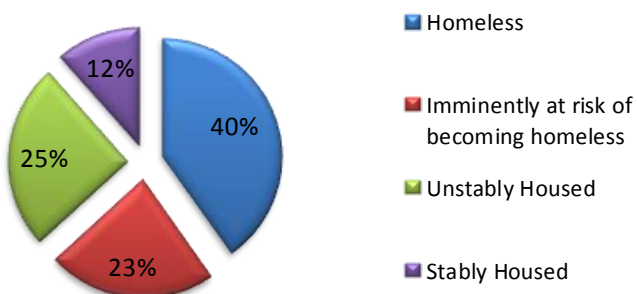
Race



Ethnicity



Housing Status At Entry



Case Management Stories

Meet CW

CW suffers from Schizophrenia and has lived most of her adult life in shelters or on the streets. She was exploited and victimized frequently by people due to her severe mental illness. Bethesda House found permanent housing for CW in 2014 and, for the first time in her adult life, CW was stable. She enjoyed that sense of stability for almost a year before her apartment went up in flames on the frigid morning of March 6, 2015. As she stood across the street, with nothing but the pajamas on her back, she watched as everything she had acquired burned. Dazed and in shock, CW appeared at Bethesda House with little hope that she could regain all that she had lost. Within the first week following the fire, CW was placed in a new apartment; the horror of the fire having a lasting impact on her mental health status. Several weeks later, CW found herself uprooted from her home once again; Code Enforcement posted an "Order to Vacate" on her building. This displacement proved to be the final straw for CW as she began to spiral out of control. The Case Management and Social Work Departments wasted no time as they addressed her mental health crisis, while pursuing permanent housing. The Social Worker collaborated with a community agency to ensure CW's mental health status would be closely monitored in her new apartment, while the Case Manager established permanent supportive housing. CW is once again stably housed and has an impressive support team to assist her as she works to rebuild what she had lost.

Dreams Halted

NT was born in NYC and grew up in one of its most dangerous neighborhoods. By the time NT was a teenager, he had seen more violence than most people can imagine. He knew if he did not remove himself from his unsafe environment, he would be destined to succumb to a violent lifestyle. NT moved to upstate New York in search of a better life, but fate had other plans. At the age of twenty-seven, NT was the victim of a drive-by shooting. As he lay in a hospital bed, he wondered if he could ever escape the dangerous existence he led. As he hung tenaciously to life, he made a commitment to himself and to his children that he would pull through and get his life together. After several months of grueling physical therapy, NT was finally ready to keep his promise. He moved to Schenectady and obtained a full-time job. Despite his progress, he still suffered from depression and alcohol abuse. Having heard about the great services Bethesda House offers, he came in to find an apartment and address his mental health issues. NT was warmly greeted by the staff; which immediately started assisting him in turning his life around. Within a short period of time, NT was able to obtain an apartment and to have his security deposit and first month's rent paid. Having fulfilled his promise, NT was overcome with emotion, vowing to the staff that he would take it from there and make us all very proud. Tragically, a month later, someone broke into his apartment while he was sleeping, shooting and killing him. While NT's story highlights the generosity of this community to provide him with necessary tools to afford housing, it brings up a societal issue as well – one that demands national attention – even people who work full-time jobs remain in a position where they are unable to afford safe and secure housing opportunities.

Social Work Story

BW is a 44-year-old man who has been chronically homeless for the majority of his adult life. In addition to struggling with homelessness, he also struggles with physical and mental disabilities. Due to his combination of disabilities, BW has developed a destructive reputation in the community, making him difficult to serve. He has been in and out of jail on numerous occasions due to his violent tendencies, and he has used street drugs in an effort to calm the symptoms of his mental health disability. BW has been banned from most agencies in Schenectady due to his threatening behavior when he did not get that which he believed he was entitled to receive.

In 2012, BW began utilizing services at Bethesda House as a result of a referral from the Schenectady Department of Social Services. Immediately, BW discovered Bethesda House was a perfect fit for him. He felt safe in the calm and inviting atmosphere of Bethesda House and did not feel judged for his reputation in the community or for his history of criminal behavior. BW began working with the case management team in order to locate permanent housing. Bethesda House began working with other community agencies on his behalf. BW began receiving mental health treatment and he was placed in an apartment. Bethesda House continued to monitor BW over the next few months to ensure his stability with housing and treatment.

Recently, BW became homeless again due to an eviction. He had also returned to self-medicating with street drugs and threatening agencies when he did not get what he believed was his due. BW began working with Bethesda House in the spring of 2015 and has made a miraculous turn around due to the inception of the Social Work Department. Bethesda House's Licensed Clinical Social Worker volunteers over 35 hours a week and his interventions on behalf of our guests have made an incredible impact on the services we are able to offer. BW worked with the Case Management Department to secure housing and the LCSW connected him to mental health services and provides follow-up to ensure compliance with appointments and medications. BW was connected with outpatient substance abuse services, and the team is pursuing a Shelter Plus Care voucher that will assist BW with his rent and will also require that he engage in mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Bethesda House has also created a temporary position within the Case Management Department to provide on-going assistance to individuals like BW. The Intensive Case Management Assistant works with individuals in the community and supports them in their environment. While BW has good intentions, he does not always follow through with important things like appointments and can be temperamental when he perceives that he is not being treated fairly or with respect.

As a result of comprehensive teamwork, BW has become more accountable and responsible for his actions. The treatment he is receiving for his mental and physical health has lifted a substantial weight off his shoulders. BW is a much happier and loving person as a result of his treatment. BW's team is very confident that with the continued support of his Bethesda House team, he will maintain his housing and sobriety and become an active participant in his community.

Women's Group

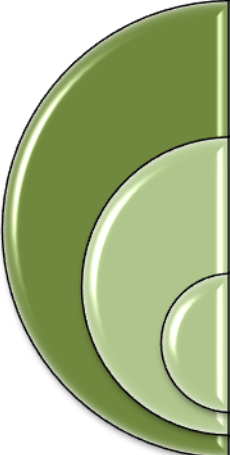
Every week an average of twenty-eight (28) women meet to discuss their life issues and seek emotional support as they work through the effects of abuse. Our confidential group meets weekly and addresses a variety of issues related to domestic violence. The group provides a comfortable atmosphere to develop healthy relationships in a nurturing environment. The group is facilitated by professionals from Bethesda House, YWCA and Sexual Assault Support at Planned Parenthood.

There are several volunteers that come each week to assist with the weekly meal and provide additional support as needed. The group discusses topics such as drug and alcohol addiction, housing crisis issues, abusive relationships, and their children. All participants provide confidential and emotional support to those who attend. The facilitators are available for outside referrals and counseling. Occasionally, guest speakers from the community come to discuss topics of interest to the women. Facilitators plan community outings such as a yearly picnic and a special Mother's Day luncheon; when financial assistance is available, crafts are purchased for attendees to make gifts and holiday projects. The group is served a lunch and, for most, it is the only meal they may eat for the day. The group is free and could be the only source of support and counseling available for those attending.

Facilitators

Bethesda House is fortunate to have dedicated facilitators who are on-site once or twice a week, making themselves available to all guests and residents who are interested in the services they provide.

The facilitators are:



Alliance for Positive Health	• Once per month
National Grid Advocate	• Once per week
Blood Pressure Clinic, run by volunteers	• Once per week
Fidelis	• Twice per month
Tenant Training in collaboration with SCAP, Legal Aid, & Center of Disability Services	• Once per quarter

Women's Group Stories

Most stories submitted are composed after staff request an interview and obtaining permission to publish the story. However, when Dee-Dee was approached, she did not want someone else to tell her story; she wanted to tell it in her own words.

Dee-Dee's Story

My name is Dee-Dee, I am one of many ladies that attend the weekly Women's Group at the Bethesda House. To give you a little background, I have been a victim of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. I have spent many years in counseling to help overcome the years of trauma and abuse I have experienced. However, as anyone who has ever been a victim of Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault knows, it does not matter how much counseling one attends or prescription meds one takes to help maintain and function in daily life, there will always be triggers that may cause flashbacks.

Recently, a close family member was raped; I was able to assist her with emotional support and guidance. However, this was a trigger for me, causing flashbacks and overwhelming emotions to come flooding back. With the support of the Women's Group Facilitators, which consists of Planned Parenthood Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis, YWCA Domestic Violence Counselors, and Bethesda House Day Program Coordinator, I was able to utilize them as a resource to re-establish myself with the appropriate counseling. The group also allows me to talk about how I am feeling and receive support from my peers. In group, there is no judgment, it does not matter who we are or where we come from, we are equal.

Recently, we covered Communication Skills, the knowledge I was provided assisted me greatly in my personal life. I was placed in a situation where my typical response would have been to argue with the person; however, I was able to utilize the skills of communication and self-control. This allowed me to speak with the proper individuals to address the situation at hand.

Over the years Women's Group has covered Several Topics such as:

- The importance of daily exercise
- Women's Health and Community resources
- Communication Skills
- Social Skills
- Learning to support our community
- Basic First Aid Skills
- To Celebrate one's self
- Self-care Skills

The ladies of Women's Group are also regular participants in their community. We have participated in the Festival of Trees through the Schenectady County Historical Society and Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake General Federation of Women's Club. Each year, the ladies gather together to create tree decorations that represent Women's Group. Our trees are placed on display and later they are auctioned off. The funds raised are then returned to the community. Additionally, we have crafted holiday cards for the Women Veterans through the Albany VA.

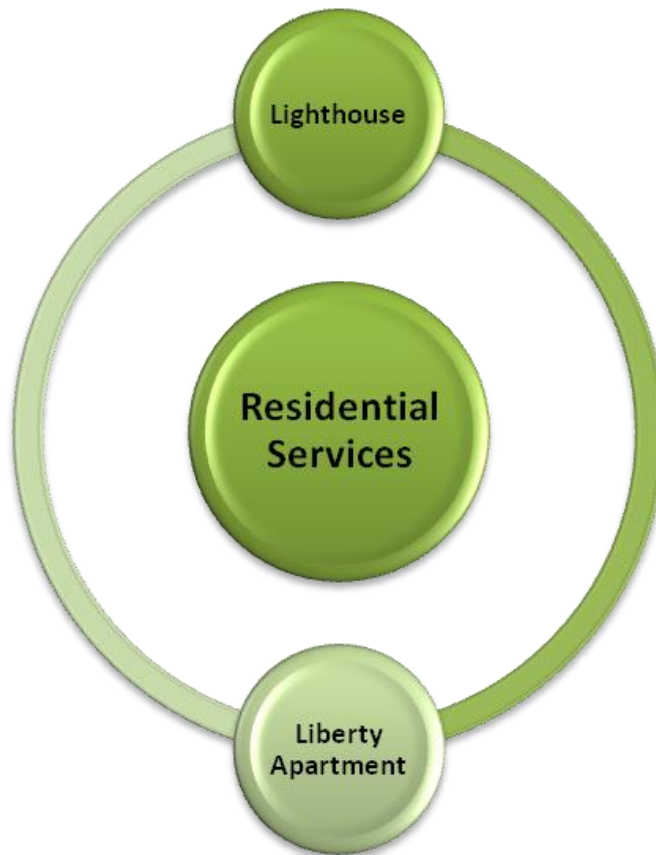
MB's Story

MB can't remember a time in her life that was easy. She was born fighting and imagines she will die fighting. Several years ago, MB hit rock bottom. Drugs, prostitution, and an abusive boyfriend were taking a serious toll on her quality of life, but nothing prepared her for the moment she was diagnosed with full blown AIDS. Realizing she did not have long to live, MB's life was consumed by anger. A look that her boyfriend gave to another woman sent her into a tailspin; one from which she would return a convicted murderer. While in prison, MB experienced a dramatic transformation. Her disease went into remission, she gained weight, and she looked much healthier. She was no longer angry; instead she was quiet and difficult to read. MB began attending Women's Group and, for the first several weeks, she sat quietly and listened. After a month or so, the silence was broken and she shared her experience with the group. The women leaned in and listened intently as MB poured out everything she kept bottled inside of her for so long. When MB started discussing her release from prison, she broke down as she revealed how she was treated in her neighborhood- people would stare and whisper "there goes the murderer." She talked about the shame she felt as she walked through Bethesda House's doors and had to face the staff that had helped her so much during her darkest days. As if a timer had gone off, the entire group of women stood and engulfed MB in a massive group hug. Since that meeting, MB has been able to hold her head up high and is receiving counseling. She has a long history of trauma, but with support of her sisters from Women's Group, she is learning how to cope with it.



Women's Group

Residential Services



Bethesda House's Residential Services Department meets the daily challenges of encouraging and assisting each resident as they work toward the goals of their Individual Service Plans. Staff and volunteers are an essential component of the primary success for each resident.

This department's experienced team, comprised of the Director of Residential Services and the Residential Supervising Case Manager, works closely with the Directors of Program and Property and Facility Operations as well as our Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This creates efficiency as staff members navigate their way through the needs of our residents. The Residential Services Department meets once a month with staff to review issues that impact programming and staffing. The Director and the Residential Supervising Case Manager regularly attend the "Single Point of Access" meetings to 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 rep 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.

In our Permanent Supportive Housing Program, the Director of Residential Services and/or the Residential Supervising Case Manager meet with each of the residents bi-weekly, establishing a level of consistency and demonstrating that each resident is important. During the scheduled meeting, they discuss progress towards goals, immediate concerns, and any modifications to the established service plan. In addition, the Director of Residential Services and the Residential Supervising Case Manager informally interact with each resident on a daily basis.

Each resident, in collaboration with the Director of Residential Services and/or the Residential Supervising Case Manager, designs the most appropriate path to manage mental health issues and addictions. Our staff will often attend appointments with the residents and assist with follow up and treatment, providing transportation to medical appointments and meetings as needed.

Residents are encouraged to participate in the Representative Payee program. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the residents receive Social Security benefits; 52% participate in the Representative Payee program. The remaining forty-eight percent (48%) not in the program are responsible for addressing their monthly obligations with the assistance of the Director of Residential Services. Thirty percent (30%) do not have a secure income and are working closely with their Case Managers in order to receive benefits. All of the residents who are currently not receiving benefits have applied and are waiting for approval.

During 2014-15, residents continued to participate in the nutritional educational program led by agency staff and staff from the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Staff members work with residents to reinforce healthy menu planning and stretching food stamp dollars.

The Lighthouse Program is a ten-bed facility located in the Mont Pleasant neighborhood of Schenectady. Seven beds are for single adults who were chronically homeless and have a disability; three beds serve as transitional housing for veterans. The goal for all of the residents living at the Lighthouse is greater independence. The Lighthouse staff work with each individual to take on more responsibility in all areas of daily living. Sixteen percent (16%) of the residents have lived at the Lighthouse for five years or longer. In our Veterans' program, of the twelve veterans admitted, more than sixty percent (60%) have had their needs met and were discharged to permanent housing.

The Life Skills Counselor and the Resident Assistants work with the residents, helping them develop basic living skills so that they will be comfortable actively participating in their community. The residents participate in community activities weekly and some volunteer at our main facility's Day Program/Drop-in Center. Activities that the residents participate in include trips to area grocery stores, movie theaters, parks, shopping malls, and restaurants. Two of our residents attend church regularly. Most of the residents have established significant relationships with members of the community and look to them to provide support during difficult times.

The residents have taken an interest in keeping up the grounds at the Lighthouse facility by completing yard work and ensuring that the property is clean. There is a garden for the residents to enjoy during the summer months; residents are encouraged to participate in its upkeep and staff educate the guests on delicious ways to prepare the bounty.

Many of the residents at the Lighthouse have never known a home of their own. They have lived in areas not fit for human habitation such as wooded areas, under bridges, in attics, or in abandoned buildings; in some cases sleeping on front porches in neighborhoods. All of our residents come in with survival skills engrained in their thinking. They have survived by being on the defensive, accepting to live in filth, eating out of dumpsters, and resting whenever and wherever they can. The skills necessary to survive a life on the street differ greatly from those necessary to keep a house. The average homeless person does not think about sanitation, they think only of survival.

During 2015-16 staff will increase their efforts to encourage the residents to take a more active role in the upkeep of their home and to become more integrated into their community. With the assistance of the Director of Residential Services, Assistant Director of Residential Services, Resident Assistants, and the Life Skills Counselor, each resident will continue to have the opportunity to work one-on-one with staff to develop the on-going skills necessary to keep their environment

neat and orderly and attend to their personal hygiene. In addition, staff will encourage residents to be more active and regularly participate in the volunteer program.

The **Liberty Apartments** is a fifteen-unit, sixteen-bed facility located on State Street in Schenectady. Residents live privately and independently while having access to supportive staff 24/7. Fourteen units are single room occupancies and one unit has double occupancy; all units have their own bathroom and fully functional kitchenette. Each resident is encouraged to make their home their own, and if necessary, to stay permanently. Over thirty-two percent (32%) of the residents have been in their homes since the facility opened in January 2010. Ninety-five (95%) percent of the residents have been in their homes for nine months or longer.

Bethesda House's Day Program Drop-in Center is a primary point of contact/entry into the system of care. The residents living at Liberty House apartments have access to all of the services provided by Bethesda House. Residents make use of the Hospitality Center, the clothing room, food pantry, and the medical management services offered (blood pressure clinic, aids counseling, etc.). Bethesda House provides outreach through the local business community; residents have access to services through Fidelis and a representative from The Veteran's Administration who visits weekly.

Residents are encouraged to participate in monthly house meetings where they are able to express their concerns. The Director of Property and Facility Operations attends all house meetings in order to answer questions and address concerns. The residents plan social and recreational activities during these meetings. Bethesda House has a van available to transport residents to community activities.

The goal for all of the residents living at the Liberty Apartments is greater independence. The design of the program does allow for greater autonomy; however, the greater percent of residents seek interaction with other residents, our Day Shelter population, and staff members in general. In addition, ninety-five percent (95%) of the residents have planned their goals for their service plans with minimal assistance from staff.

Residents of both the Lighthouse and Liberty Apartments who require more intensive staff intervention can work one-on-one with the Life Skills Counselor. The Life Skills Counselor works with all residents to provide graduated instruction and remains a presence until they can independently complete the task. For those residents with physical disabilities, the Life Skills Counselor encourages as much independence as possible and assists with tasks that are beyond their physical capabilities. The Life Skills Counselor also assists residents with nutritional counseling, menu planning, food, and personal needs shopping and assists with planning recreational activities.

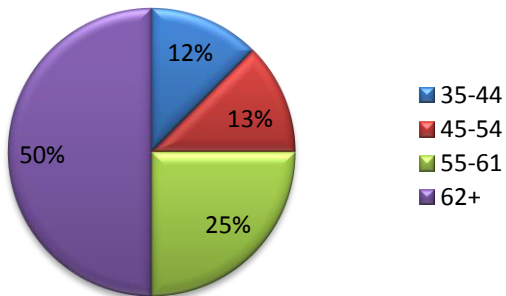
Obtaining secure and stable housing is the first step in alleviating the inconsistencies and trauma associated with living on the streets. It takes a great deal of time for a homeless person to let go of street living and to trust that they are worthy of this new life. With each step forward, there can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



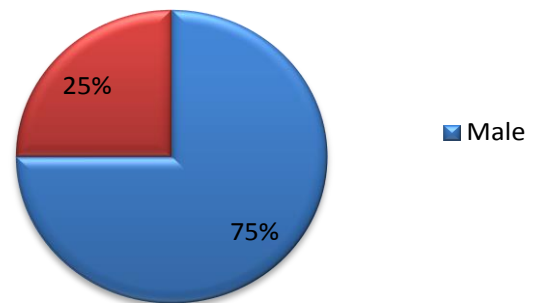
Kathy, Liberty House Resident

Lighthouse Permanent Supportive Housing

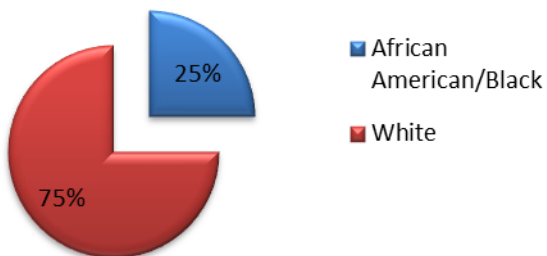
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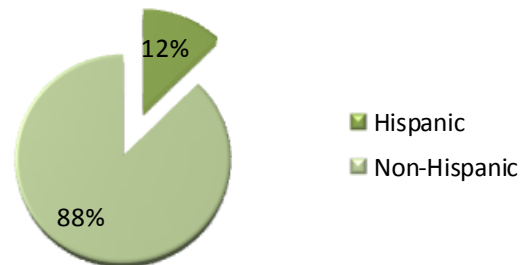
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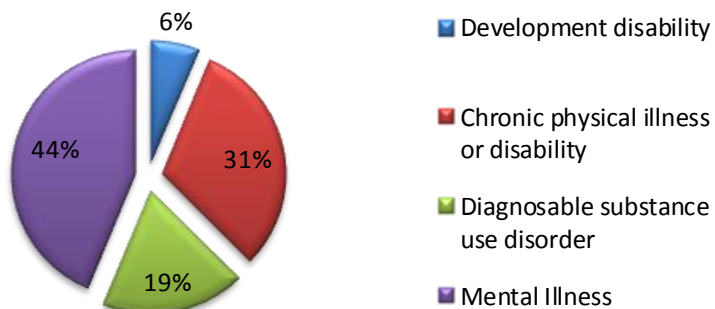
Race



Ethnicity

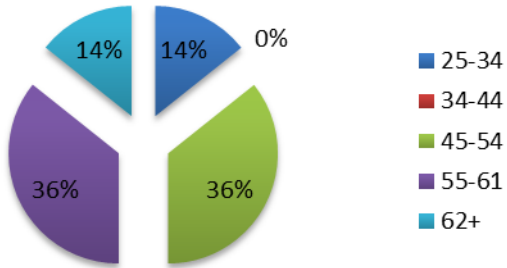


Disability

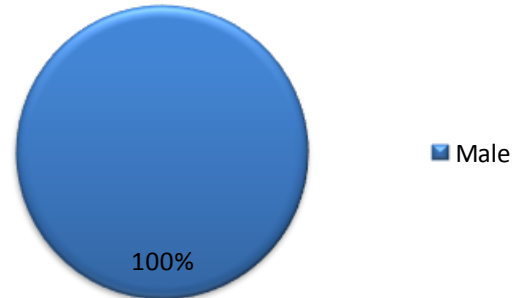


Lighthouse Transitional Housing Veterans

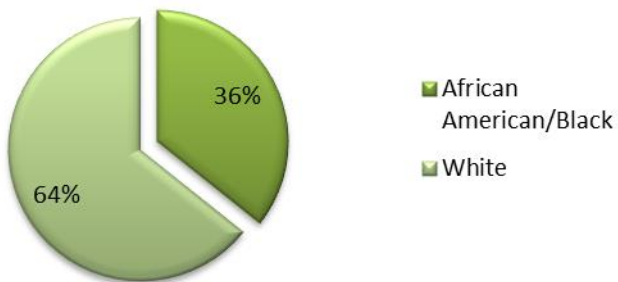
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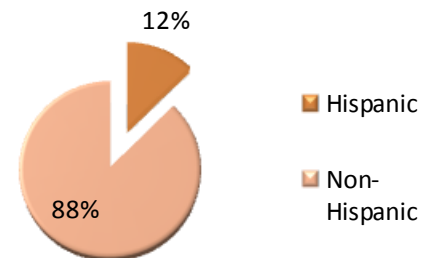
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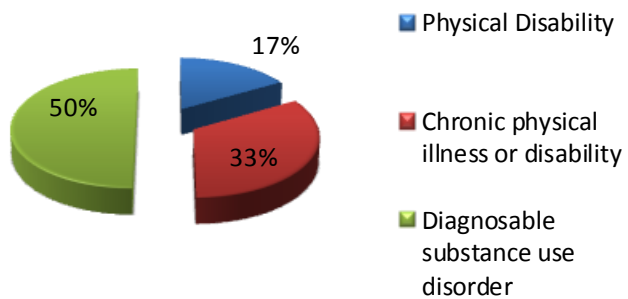
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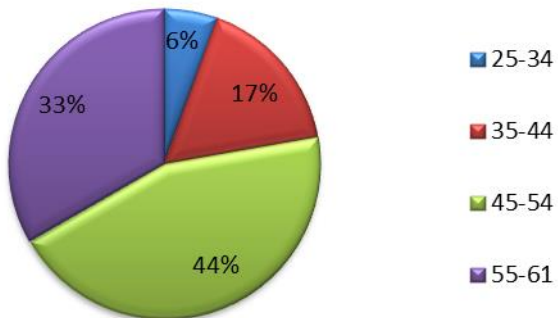


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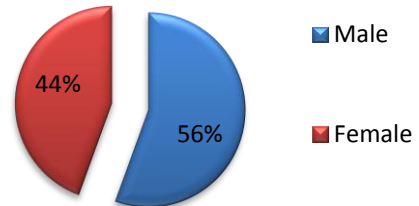


Liberty Apartments Demographics

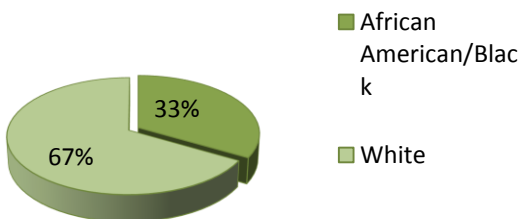
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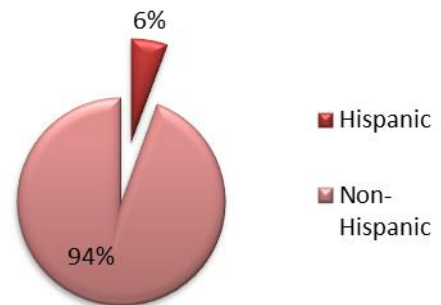
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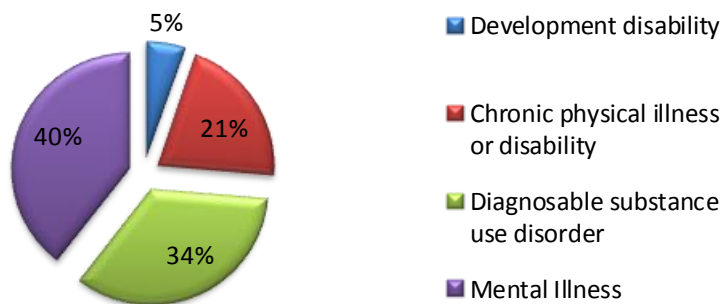
Race



Ethnicity



Disability



Resident Stories

Under the umbrella of Bethesda House (BH), residents have access to services such as: life skills, case management, financial case management, medical management, food and clothing programs, and educational programs. BH's Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and the Residential team provide advocacy with community partners to ensure the necessary services are available and utilized, such as mental health appointments, substance abuse treatment, and probation. In addition, our case management and program staff build social interaction skills and encourage employment search and volunteer work in the community. Bethesda House provides a service rich environment where continuous housing is not dependent upon participation in treatment services. The focus is on strengthening our community and building positive relationships with peers.

During this funding year, two of our residents have had ongoing legal issues, which resulted in incarcerations. BH's LCSW, Case Manager, and Residential team worked with law enforcement. Ongoing meetings with probation officers and medical and mental health doctors proved beneficial in that not only were we able to minimize the time our residents spent in jail, we developed an extensive plan for medication management, attending doctors' appointments with the residents, and being part of the medical treatment meetings. Working together to obtain solutions had positive results.

Today, both residents are stable and have been taking their medication. Due to this stabilization, their uncontrollable, aggressive behavior has subsided and both are making progress with their Individualized Living Plans (ILP). In addition, an increase in communication and collaboration with law enforcement and mental health professionals has been established.

JD's Story

JD was chronically homeless for years before being admitted into our permanent supportive housing program. He had been on a continuous spiral of sanctions by the Department of Social Services, because he was unable to comply with their requests. For many years, he would be at Bethesda House each day seeking essential and basic needs services from our Day Shelter and Case Management Department, but he would always leave. Eventually, he began to work with the Case Management Department and, through outreach, he became more engaged. Prior to working with BH's Case Management, JD had denied being homeless. The last time JD stayed in a homeless shelter, someone stole his belongings while he was sleeping. From that point on, he was afraid of going back. JD suffers from mental health concerns, anxiety disorder and panic attacks. His goal has always been to get a job. Today he loves having a place to call his own and, through the Schenectady Job Training Program offered by DSS, he has been receiving janitorial job training.

Looking Back

Volunteers:

Bethesda House is deeply grateful for our wonderful volunteers. We feel their energy and love each day and would not be able to carry out our mission and vision without their gifts of time and compassion.



Annual Client Barbeque in Central Park



Education

Cornell Cooperative Extension and Jake Rowe, Food and Nutrition Coordinator, provided Nutritional Education during our on-going, eight-week program. Agency staff and staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension teach class participants a wide range of basic nutritional information from menu planning, healthy food selections, to meal preparation. Participants learn the benefits of healthy eating and the positive effects of weight loss and healthier bodies. The program staff teaches how to stretch food stamp dollars and when to access local food pantries to supplement their meals.

Financial Summary

Bethesda House's 2014-15 fiscal year ended with an operating surplus of \$20,201 and an overall agency deficit of \$168,840, which includes depreciation for capital items supported by foundation and government contracts.

The agency's most significant fiscal challenge this year was related to fundraising. In Human Service agencies such as Bethesda House, there is a direct correlation between the country's economic health and the number of people in need of services. During our 2014-15 fiscal year, Bethesda House Administration and Board of Directors took an active approach to fundraising initiatives, securing funds from private foundations, and cultivating a more extensive donor base. With this commitment, our 2014-15 contributions exceeded our 2013-14 contributions by 6.5%. In addition, ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) was solicited from COINS Foundation for an upgrade to our security system.

Contribution dollars allow our agency to enhance and increase the services we provide to the homeless and impoverished members of Schenectady County. We are deeply grateful to have received generous donations from The Edward D Cammarota Foundation and the Upper NY Conference of United Methodist Church.

Bethesda House will continue to explore initiatives to increase our contribution dollars to strengthen our programs and build upon our current success of housing the homeless, feeding the hungry, providing social work services directly related to mental health, and providing crisis and emergency services to those in need.



Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.

Management Team

Kimarie Sheppard, Executive Director

Anne McGhee, Program Director

Danny Payne, Director of Residential Services

Harold (Butch) Fogg and Kevin Fogg, Director of Property and Facility Operations





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