



Bethesda House of
Schenectady, Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

2020



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Thank you for your commitment
to help us serve the homeless and
most vulnerable citizens in
Schenectady County.



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.

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www.bethesdahouseschenectady.org

COVID-19 has changed the world as well as how we perceive the effects on our daily lives. We have struggled to be gentle with ourselves while being honest with our feelings and our perspective. We have had to let go of the way we work, live and embrace friends and family. Sadness entered our lives but does not need to overpower us.

Many of us have asked what we can and should do for our fellow human beings or about who we are and how we can make change. Gratitude and action are our choices to make.

At Bethesda House, we never closed, never turned anyone away. All staff were and continue to be on the front lines, caring for and providing services to the homeless and at-risk population in Schenectady County. At the onset of this health crisis, we opened a temporary emergency shelter to answer the call for more beds for the homeless population. We kept people safe, in turn helped to keep the community safer. We became part of a coalition to address food insecurity and provided outreach services to anyone who was quarantined, whether self or mandated. We answered the call and we continue daily to live our mission.

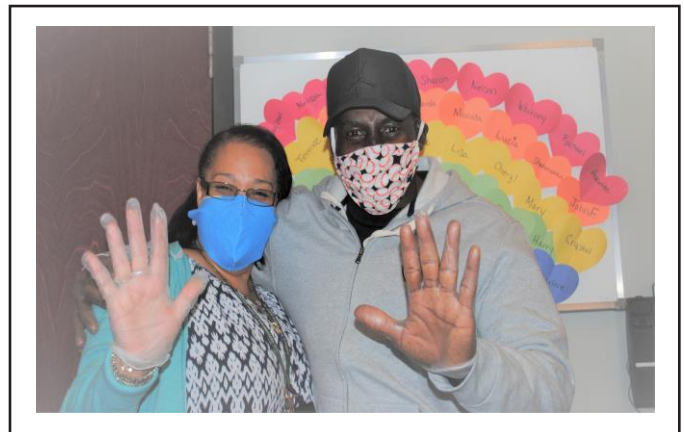
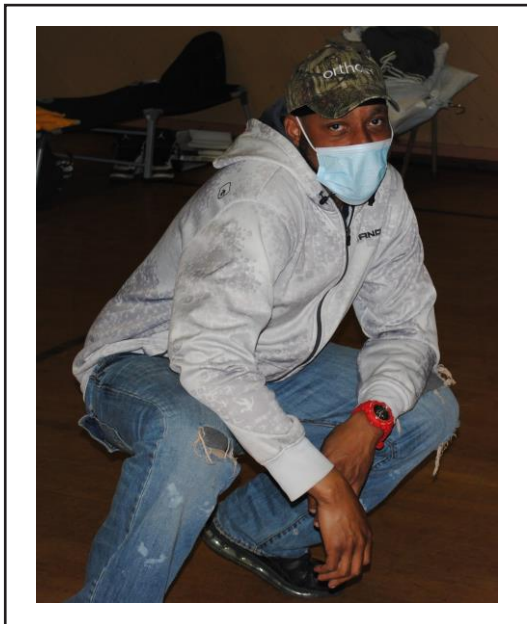


Table of Contents

A Message from the Board President	pg 4
Bethesda House at a Glance.....	pg 5
Introduction	pg 8
Program Department	pg 11
Case Management & Social Work Services.....	pg 15
Social Work Services.....	pg 19
Residential Services	pg 22
Looking Back	pg 25
Financial Summary	pg 27

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 Friend,

When the world came to a stop in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 health crisis the needs of the community Bethesda House serves did not stop; in fact, they became greater. Loss of income and shortages in the availability of basic services, health care, food, and shelter grew. Fear and uncertainty loomed and yet the brave and dedicated staff of Bethesda House jumped into action and asked: "How can we help?"

It was a true inspiration and blessing to see the staff and Executive Director Kimarie Sheppard redesign, rethink, and reimagine to not only offer more services but also to adapt and protect the residents, staff, and emergency shelter guests. First, a plan was put in place to have all emergency shelter guests and residents shelter in place. The task of helping an already-fragile population navigate this new normal was done with compassion and the extraordinary skills of the Bethesda House staff. They also looked beyond their own 4 walls and initiated a partnership with the State Street Presbyterian Church, located across the street, to open a new emergency shelter to help even more in need during the pandemic. As other agencies reduced their services, Bethesda House expanded.

I am so humbled by the compassion and resilience shown by the Bethesda Staff during this time-like-no-other.

Since joining the board 4 years ago, the growth of the agency and desire to further expand services to meet the changing needs of the homeless and disadvantaged members of the community I have witnessed has been nothing short of remarkable. I hope you will join me in thanking the staff for their selfless service, especially during this time when many understandably turned their focus to home, the Bethesda staff held out their hand and kept the doors open.

The generosity of our supporters like you with time, talent, and resources makes all the difference to our staff on the front lines.

We appreciate your blessings and continued future support.

Sincerely,



Cathy Terwilliger, Board President

Bethesda House at a Glance



"Hail to the man who went through life always helping others, knowing no fear, and to whom aggressiveness and resentment are alien" - Albert Einstein

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.

Guests Served	Total 2019- 2020*	Total 2018- 2019
Guests	54,642	56,175
Unduplicated Guests Receiving Services	5,926	7,606
First Time Guests	1,778	2,733
Homeless Guests	4,055	5,020

*2019-2020 numbers are lower than 2018-2019 due to COVID-19 and the CDC safety measures that were implemented.

The numbers reflect cumulative totals of services provided.

Program Department Services	Total 2019-2020	Total 2018-2019
Consumer Choice Food Pantry — Meals Served	12,195	15,294
P.G. Wright Food Pantry – Meals Served	8,991	17,629
Clothing Room	884	1,095
Showers	2,843	3,867
Telephone	849	1,305
Hygiene Kits	407	1,395
*Mailboxes	45,910	45,910
Daily Meal	27,792	32,264
Laundry	2,095	1,118
Lockers	8,544	7,015

The numbers reflect cumulative totals of scheduled appointments.

Case Management Services	Total 2019-2020	Total 2018-2019
Housing, Permanent and Emergency	4,182	5,713
Representative Payee	2,953	2,607
Case Management Services	2,982	2,505
Emergency Services	925	1,375
Referred for Income	631	857
Secured Income	147	195
Social Work avg monthly caseload / contacts /month	50 / 4,800	40 / 3,720
DSRIP 2 ED Triage: Transportation Program	504 / 1,200 trips	285 / 4,680 trips
CASAC- DSS Assessments completed & follow-up	1,233	1,626
Outreach Case Management: individuals / contacts	379 / 1,310	262 / 1,572
Health Home Care Coordination individuals	286	277
Medical Care Program avg monthly caseload	26	19
Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner avg monthly caseload	40	0
*Continuum of Care (COC) Coordinated Entry Referrals	803	811
*Continuum of Care (COC) Coordinated Entry Housed	563	229

Residential Services	Total
Lighthouse total served including Veterans	19
Liberty Apartments total served	20
Beacon Scattered Sites	11

Code Blue Emergency Shelter – 11/01/19 – 5/09/20	Total
Un-Duplicated Guests served	234
Beds utilized	1,590
Number of Males	168
Number of Females	66

Temporary Shelter 4/1/2020 – 6/30/2020	Total
Program Shelter Stay participants (unduplicated)	50
Total utilization of shelter stay beds	855
Total beds approved for shelter stay	935
Number of Males	42
Number of Females	8

Emergency Overnight Shelter	Total
Program Shelter Stay participants (unduplicated)	405
Total utilization of shelter stay beds	3,553
Total beds approved for shelter stay	5,956
Number of Males	252
Number of Females	154

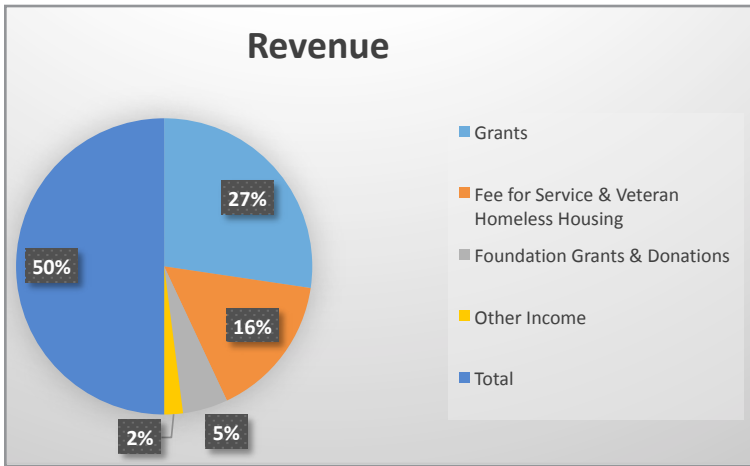
- * *CoC is community-wide, includes 13 area providers.
- * Area providers referred 2,232 individuals to Bethesda House for: Case Management - 859, Home Connections – 403, Emergency Services - 925 and 45 Residential Services
- * Case Management and Program staff referred 235 consumers to area providers 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

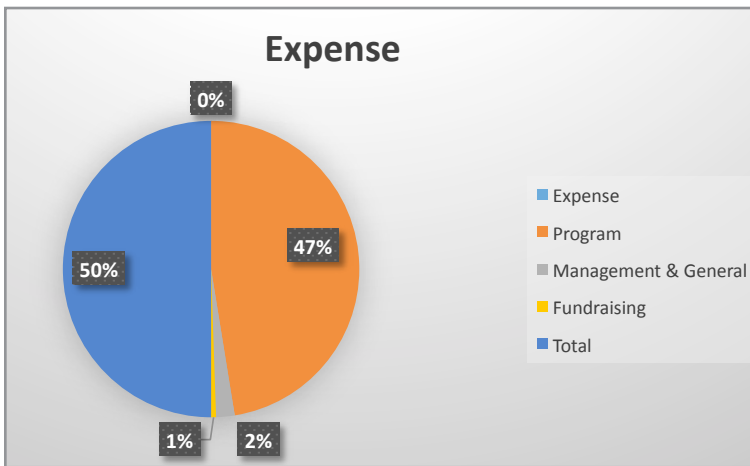
Revenue	Amount
Grants	1,578,308
Fee for Service & Veteran Homeless Housing	906,453
Foundation Grants & Donations	284,026
Other Income	117,884
Total	2,886,671

Expense	Amount
Program	2,725,838
Management & General	115,879
Fundraising	30,874
Total	2,872,591



In-Kind & Volunteers 2018-2019

Volunteer Hours	2,993
Value of Volunteer Hours	58,384
Value of Donated Items	106,861
Total Value of Hours and Items	165,245



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, 2019 to June 30, 2020. 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 2019-2020. 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's 2019-2020 fiscal year should be considered as two separate cycles. From July 2019 through mid-March 2020, the total number of guest served increased by 5.2% over 2018-2019. Existing programs were restructured to accommodate the increased need. We continue to meet with individuals who, for the first time in their lives needed assistance; people who are aging, that have lived their lives on the streets and could no longer tolerate the cold; and people with unaddressed, complex medical and mental health needs which require immediate attention.

In mid-March, as the health crisis began to unfold, we significantly modified services to support the needs of the community while keeping staff, residents, and guests safe. From mid-March to June 30, 2020, even though we never closed, the total number of people served was dramatically reduced; the total reduction from 2018-2019 was 37.8%.

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 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 five service dimensions of the agency: Program Department: Day Program Drop-in Center/ Essential Services and Overnight Emergency Shelter, 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 the harshness and difficulties of life and who are hopeful to find guidance out of their despair.

The Coordinated Entry Program, under the umbrella of the Program Department and in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of NENY, 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.

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.

- 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 to first manage the crisis and then to proceed toward the overall goal of moving individuals out of the cycle of homelessness and poverty. All Case Managers are available to any guest who is in need of our emergency/essential and housing services.

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, processes intakes, completes mental health assessments, and initiates referrals to area mental and physical health providers. Long-term counseling and support is available. Bethesda House has implemented programs designed to support the reduction of Emergency Department utilization.

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. In 2002, the Agency opened its first 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.

Housing First ~ 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.

Residential programs include the Lighthouse - seven beds, Liberty Apartments - sixteen beds, and the Beacon - eight scattered-site apartments 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 self-respect, personal growth, 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
Single Point of Access Committee (SPOA)
Eviction Task Force
Coordinated Entry
Mental Health Sub-Committee
Schenectady County Re-entry Task Force
Adults at Risk – Schenectady County
The Food Pantries of the Capital District

Homeless Veterans
Homeless Services Planning Board
Schenectady Coalition for a Healthy Community
CDPHP – Food is Medicine Program
Concerned for the Hungry
HSPB – Data 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
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

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU):

Ellis Medical Center Department of Psychiatry
The YWCA of Schenectady
Schenectady County Re-Entry Task Force
Cornell University Cooperative Extension

“All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.” – Winston Churchill

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!**





The Program Department Purpose – is to provide a safe, supportive environment for homeless, vulnerable, and/or at-risk individuals to access 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 Care 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 safe, 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 – In 2012, the Agency implemented a nutrient dense, nutritional platform. The food programs provide healthy, low fat and low sodium foods. Our partner, Cornell Cooperative Extension, provides monthly nutritional education and cooking classes, using items from our food pantry. During this time, 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 household’s 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, with staff and guests strictly following recommendations.

Client Choice Food Pantry – The main food pantry at 834 State Street and our satellite food pantry located at the Yates Village apartment complex in the 12308 zip code, offer a variety of food items. Food items are purchased at the Regional Food Bank with our annual award or with donated dollars specifically allocated to the food program. In the past year, there has been an increase in referrals and requests for food bag deliveries. Staff have worked with Ellis hospital to provide an emergency Pantry food bag for individuals being discharged from the hospital. Community referrals and referrals through the Unite Us platform also request emergency food bags to be dropped off in the community.

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

Day Program guests are offered support from the Agency's Registered Nurse who is 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.



“Our human compassion binds us the one to the other – not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.” – Nelson Mandela

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 assistance.

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 – three high school youth on specific job skills through coaching and mentoring. These youth gain a better 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 format 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.

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

Women’s Support Group celebrates twenty-years of sisterhood! One of the longest running programs at Bethesda House is bound by Sisterhood. This level of connection and commitment develops over time, and has been fostered by the compassionate and professional facilitators from Bethesda House, YWCA, and Planned Parenthood. Every Thursday, with the love and support of long-time volunteers, this group gathers 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 Group has several luncheon outings each year which are supported by volunteers.

Men’s Support Group celebrates five years of camaraderie. Reverend Richard Parsons facilitates group discussions 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.

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 is an effort to improve self-awareness and reduce the risk of repeated mistakes or common pitfalls.

Schenectady County 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 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. This HUD funded program 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, and VCHC, Alliance for Positive Health and The Re-Entry Task Force. Through this standardized assessment tool and evaluation process, 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 2019-2020 there was a total of 803 homeless singles and families, who entered an area agency seeking services.

Overnight Emergency Shelter – The Agency offers a 14-bed Overnight Emergency Shelter, 365 days of the year. The shelter is expanded during cold weather and was recently increased to accommodate the county need during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 Aids 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 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 Aids 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 psychosocial assessment and work to connect each individual to appropriate services. Social Workers are available daily to ensure services are on-going and engagement in essential treatment is promoted to assist in housing stabilization.

Temporary Emergency Shelter – As mentioned, Bethesda House partnered with Schenectady Department of Social Services and the State Street Presbyterian Church to open a 90-day, eighteen (18) bed, 24/7 emergency shelter to address the need for an increase in shelter beds due to COVID-19. Despite the unprecedented nature of the moment, and the increase in services offered, all direct and wrap-around services were maintained, identical to the on-going overnight emergency shelter.

Between the two shelters, the Agency was able to provide shelter and services in a safe environment to fifty-five (55) unique individuals. All fifty-five adults remained COVID-19 free for the duration of the expanded shelter.

Success Stories:

Beth, now in her late 40's, lived in New York City for most of her life. She worked hard to support her family. Beth suffered from anxiety and depression, which resulted in self-medication. After losing her job, she turned to burglary to support her emerging drug habit and her family. After her arrest and being incarcerated for 3-years, she was released to Schenectady County because she had family in the county.

She was released on parole with numerous parameters and responsibilities which were foreign to her. Beth was placed at Bethesda House's Overnight Emergency Shelter upon her release. Her first night at the shelter was difficult; as she was emotional, defensive, volatile, and wanted to leave. However, her shelter stay was a condition of her release from jail. Following the initial transition, Beth felt comfortable enough to start working with the Social Work/Case Management team and they collaboratively devised a plan for re-integration back to the community. Case Management staff helped her explore professional viability and current employment options, which resulted in her securing a job at a local grocery store.

A significant stressor in Beth's life was her compromised health and untreated chronic condition of COPD. The Agency intervened and arranged to have Beth's Oxygen Therapy (Concentrator) delivered to the shelter so she could manage her condition and have it not impact her work. During her shelter stay, staff assisted her in her goal to regain her CDL and return to driving a bus. The process felt overwhelming to Beth who already suffered from anxiety, as there would be a litany of fines to pay, a mountain of paperwork to complete, and finally studying for the CDL test.

Along the way, the temporary assistance that was supporting Beth and paying for shelter services had ended due to her employment and the impact was debilitating. Feeling the "deck was stacked against her", she nearly gave up. However, with the support of staff and her personal determination, Beth stuck to her plan and was able to pay her fines and eventually she received her license back.

She took control of her life once again and never looked back. Within a few weeks of working as a driver, Beth packed her belongings from the shelter and was able to secure a small studio. She comes back to the Agency every so often to check in and let staff know how she is doing. Today, Beth is still housed and working. She attends meetings when she can and is an inspiration to everyone. Beth is a testament to what hard work, determination and support from others can do. She knew it was going to be a hard road; she continued moving forward and is continuing to steer her own ship – or in her case – a bus.



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 LDSS 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. 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.

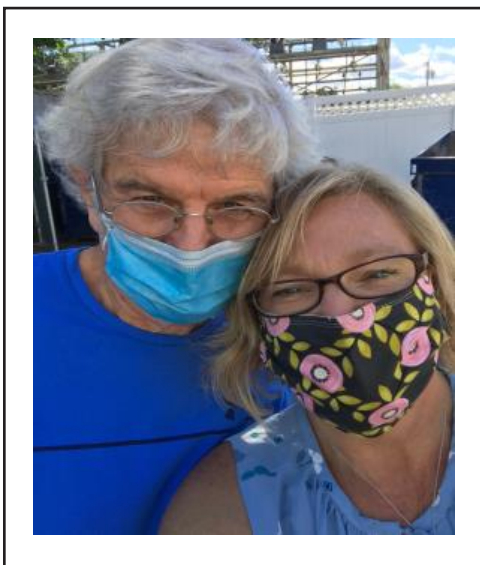
Shelter/Housing – The Housing First model, which is employed by all departments within the agency, continues to be our guiding principle as we search to find permanent housing options for the most vulnerable.

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 to 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.



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 of successful integration 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.

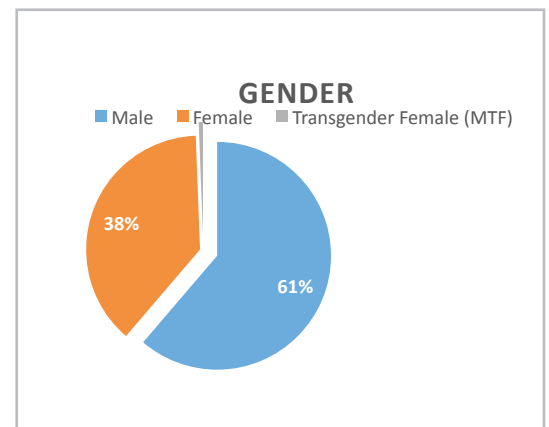
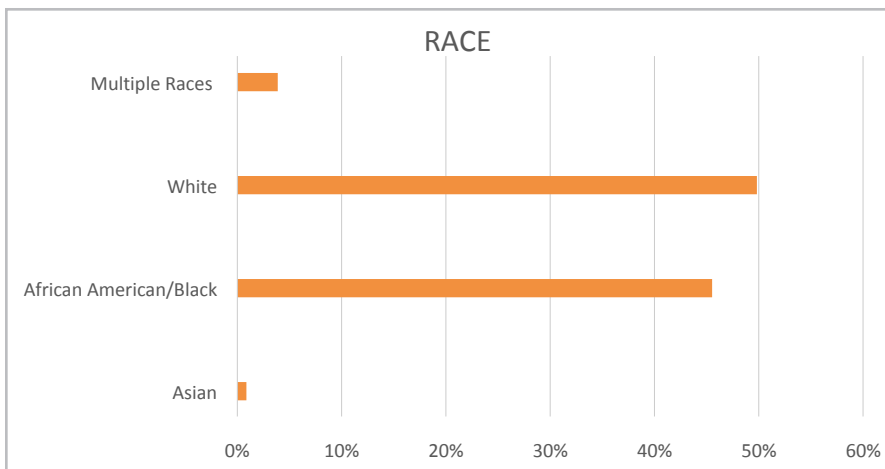
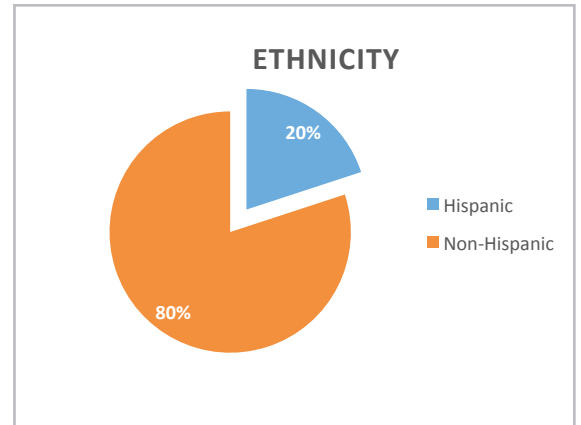
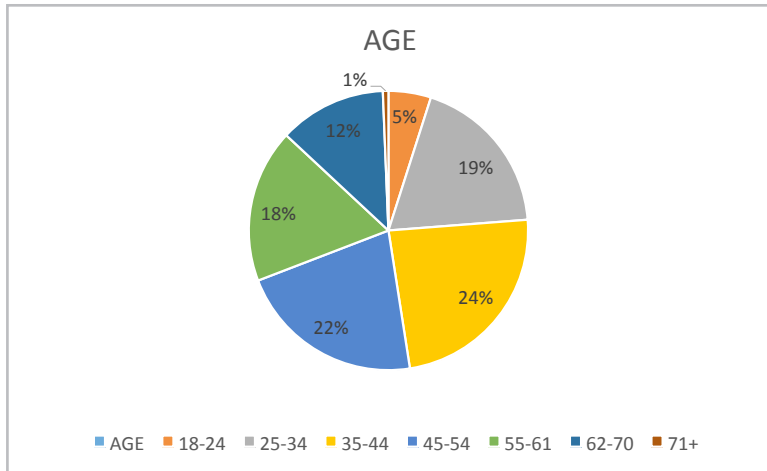
The Future of Case Management at Bethesda House – The Case Management Supervisor plans to conduct a monthly Tenant Education Program for clients to better understand and establish successful working relationships with landlords, and also highlight Tenant’s legal rights. This training will empower clients to improve communication with landlords, advocate for their rights, and cope with conflict.

Bethesda House has received an increase in eviction prevention and rapid re-housing funding to address the needs of Schenectady County especially in the wake of COVID-19. Our goal is to increase stabilization services.

“When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: you haven’t.” – Thomas A. Edison



Housing, Crisis, Rep Payee, & Home Connections Services



Disability	% of Population
Development Disability	25%
Chronic Health	68%
Substance Use Disorder	52%
Mental Illness	86%
HIV/AIDS	3%
Physical Disability	56%

Neighborhood	Percentage
Central State Street	28.6%
Downtown	16.1%
Hamilton Hill	28.6%
Mt. Pleasant	16.1%
North Schenectady	1.8%
Union Street	8.9%

- Services
- Stabilizing emergencies
 - Reducing 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 – 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 9:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday for respite, access to basic needs, and assistance with emergency services. If they chose, they will be connected with in-house or community resources. Social Work services are offered to those walking in and seeking support or advocacy.

DSS Overnight Shelter – Bethesda House offers a year-long overnight emergency shelter to the homeless in Schenectady. The shelter is expanded during extraordinary events, such as the COVID pandemic. Shelter offers meals, showers, laundry services, and assistance in connecting to area providers. Licensed Social Worker and Outreach services are integrated into the staffing of the Shelter in order to increase engagement in services and support individuals' efforts to stabilize.

Code Blue Shelter – The Agency's Code Blue Shelter program, is in operation from November through mid-April and runs similarly to the DSS Overnight Shelter. During Code Blue, Licensed Social Work staff will encounter individuals that normally do not access services. These guests are not engaged in Social Services or with area providers, therefore Social Work and Outreach staff work diligently to engage and connect to services.

Temporary Emergency Shelter – a temporary, 90-day, emergency shelter was created to answer the call for needed beds during the initial COVID-19 health crisis. Due to the experience and practice the Agency has with the DSS Shelter, the same high-level services were offered to shelter guests. The unique environmental circumstances during the pandemic affected the clinical supports offered. Guests were requested to remain on site and could not access traditional public spaces. Social Work staff provided supportive counseling on a daily basis, intensified case management needs, and strategies on coping skills.

Outreach Case Management – In 2018, the Agency implemented a Street Outreach Case Management program. Outreach staff primarily work in the community providing food, clothing, connection to area providers, and transportation. The Outreach Case Manager established 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 brought a person or persons to the Agency to meet with Case Management or Social Work staff. This program is fully functional and continues to provide strong work.

Medical Services – In collaboration with Ellis Hospital, the RN Program provides onsite RN evaluations, assistance with medication management, and connection to appropriate medical services. RN engages agency guests not connected to medical care and works with visiting Ellis Resident Doctors to provide medical evaluations and treatment to those in the program. RN also works with program participants to connect them to Primary Care in the community. This service is offered to all those connected to Bethesda House or walking-in from the community with an issue.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner – The Bethesda House PNP Program was initiated in July 2019 providing Psychiatric services onsite twice a week. Those referred to the PNP Program will also meet with Social Work as a screening for services and also for providing a more comprehensive treatment plan. The PNP will complete a thorough Psychiatric evaluation and provide treatment as appropriate. Social Work staff work collaboratively with the PNP to assist in connecting to additional services, provide case management, and consistent supportive counseling.

Health Home – Bethesda House Health Home services started in January 2019. The Program started with four Care Coordinators and has expanded to include support staff, improving the quality and functioning of the program. Care Coordinators provide case management services, work diligently to connect clients to medical and mental health services while addressing Social Determinants of Health. The Health Home staff work closely with in-house supports but is coordinating 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 determine 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, 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 guests, Drop-in Center guests are able to see staff even 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 gain 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 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 shown to be effective with the population. We will be expanding the Health Home program by adding staff which allow us to reach and provide services to more members. In our experience, Outreach Case Management staff are critical in reaching the outliers, the people that are in encampments and 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 Friday. Our staff has 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.





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 was 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 engage and connect 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 provide 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 2019-2020 14 individuals participated in the program.

Support Services – Residential staff interact with residents 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.

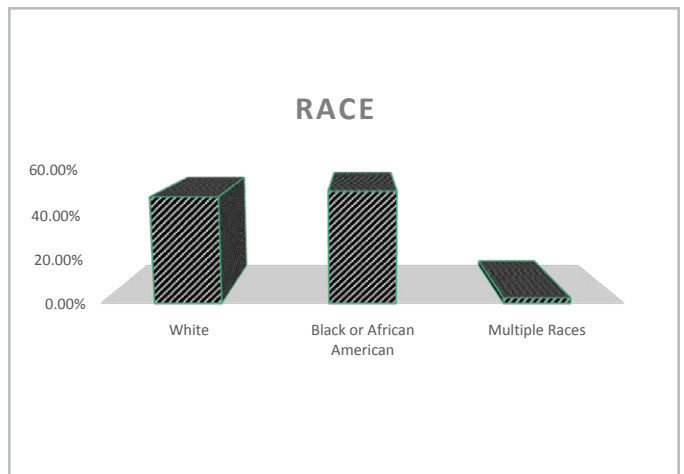
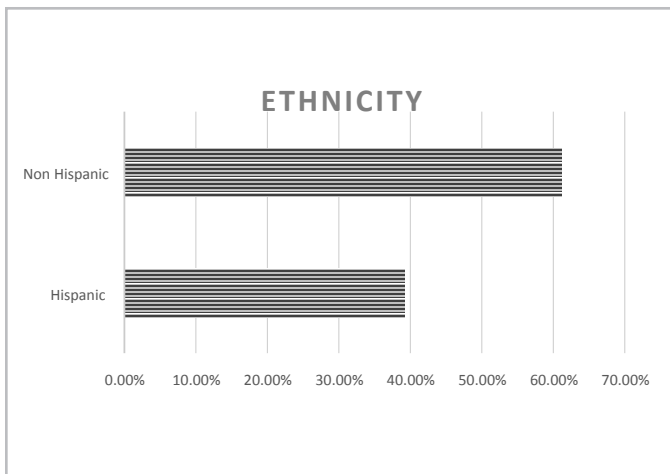
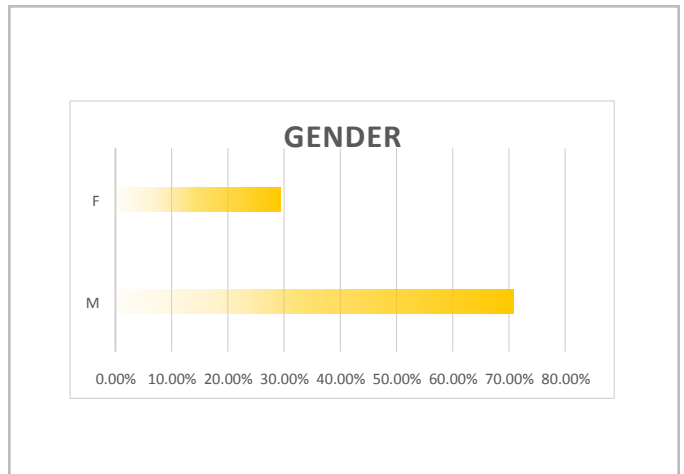
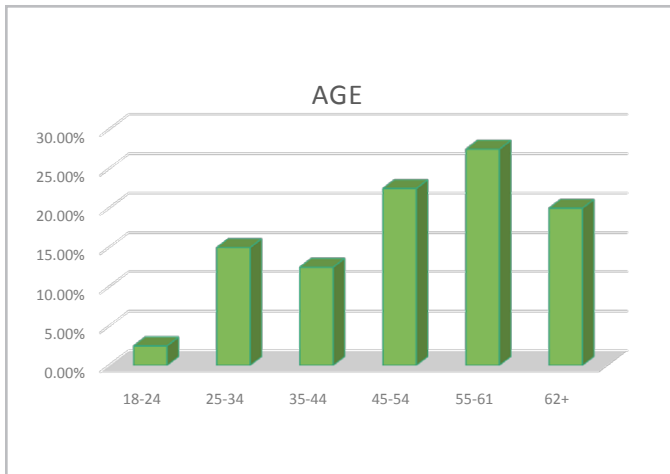
Obtaining secure and stable housing is the first step in alleviating the lifestyle affects and trauma associated with living on the streets. It takes a great deal of time for a homeless person to let go of street life and to trust that they are worthy of their new life. With each step forward, there 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 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, develop skillful ways to communicate and manage anxiety. The Agency will further develop the resident volunteer program and encourage to sign up for volunteer programs in the community.

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." – Albert Einstein



Disability	% of Residents, Based on 31 Residents
Development Disability	17.07%
Chronic Health	34.15%
Substance Use Disorder	46.34%
Mental Illness	82.97%
Physical Disability	36.57%

Number of Conditions	Percentage
1 Condition	21.95%
2 Conditions	29.27%
3+ Conditions	48.78%

Looking Back

Thank you to our Volunteers and Community Supporters! Volunteering is not just about giving; it is a way of living!

We are deeply grateful to **St. Kateri Takawitha Parish Church, Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Joseph's of Scotia, and Immanuel Lutheran** – who provide delicious sandwiches for our daily meal, emergency shelter, and street outreach.

We are humbled by the support from **Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, Congregation Gates of Heaven, Friendship Baptist Church, Ladies of Charity Schenectady Vicarate, Lynwood Reformed Church, First Reformed Church of Schenectady, Pinegrove United Methodist Church, Lisha Kill Reformed Church, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Unitarian Universalist Society, St. Luke's, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and Burnt Hills United Methodist Church.**

Congressman Paul Tonko and wonderful volunteers help to make our community holiday meals enjoyable and meaningful. We come together to share in the importance of caring for our neighbors and reflect on the blessing we have. Thank you to our **Board Members** for donating turkeys and baked goods.

The Youth Group and Sr. Rosemary, from **St. Madeleine Sophie Parish in Guilderland**, provided entertainment for our Christmas Eve meal. The children, and their parents, were thrilled to be part of this event. Their mothers also mentioned how humbled they felt. The children and Sr. Rosemary are hoping to be able to join us for our 2020 holiday celebration.

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.

The Giagiacumo Family had a hygiene product collection at their annual Christmas party and donated the much-needed products to our Day Program.

[Community Programs & Partnerships](#)

Bethesda House's Back to School Backpack Program, with support from **Stewart's Shops**, is designed to prepare as many children, for school, by providing a back- pack filled with all the required school supplies. In 2019, we were able to purchase classroom supplies, which helped to support children's school needs for most of the school year.

In the fall, local **Niskayuna Girl Scouts** constructed a lending library on our main campus. Donating their time and talent, these young ladies, planned, fundraised, built and now maintain the books inside our lending library. It is never too early to learn to give back to the community.

Hannaford elected Bethesda House as part of their **Bags 4 My Cause** program, where we receive a dollar for every re-usable bag they sell during certain times of the year.

Rivers Resort and Casino is an on-going community partner. During 2019-2020 we received regular donations of food, hygiene products, and monetary support.

SUNY's Got Your Back is a program that offers comfort care bags to Domestic Abuse and Homeless Shelters across the state. Bethesda House was blessed to receive 200 of these bags filled with hygiene products. Our guests were thrilled to receive these bags.

Organizational giving, whether it is a monetary donation or an in-kind donation of material goods, supports our programs and brings light and hope to our guests and residents.

continued on page 26

Our **2019 Veteran's Stand Down** had another successful year. Bethesda House participated with dozens of other local organizations to provide a day of gratitude and assistance to Veterans in need.

In March, when the pandemic reached our community, the Agency immediately began to explore safety options and how we could continue to support the homeless and at-risk population. Bethesda House is an essential services agency and we did not close our doors.

Within days of the crisis, Rivers Resort and Casino contacted Bethesda House and asked "how can we help, what do you need?" We began receiving weekly donations of food, PPE, and cleaning supplies. These vital, essential items helped us as we continued to provide services.

The Agency's staff and volunteers were positively inspired by our community partners and members, who have supported us during this pandemic.

Thank you to: **Quick Response** who donated a portion of their time and cleaning services; to **The Wolf Road IHOP** who supported our breakfast program with donations of pancake batter, bacon, eggs and sausage; to **The 107th Air Force National Guard** who, during the pandemic, brought our shelter guests breakfast, lunches and dinners; to **CDPHP's** caterer who prepared and delivered 100-boxed lunches weekly during the summer; to **AllTowne Fresh** who provided our Soup Kitchen with various fresh and prepared food; and to **Agency Board Members** who created awareness and provided masks and cleaning supplies.

A special heartfelt **Thank You** to the following community members and organizations who donated specifically to provide COVID-19 relief in the form of food, cleaning supplies, facemasks and more. **The Food Pantries of the Capital District, The Schenectady Foundations, Schenectady County Department of Social Services, Street Soldiers, CARES of NY, Inc., Jumpin' Jacks, Betsey Kuzia and Barbara Bradford, The Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society of Duryce Memorial AME Zion Church, Schenectady Quilters, Schenectady County Emergency Management Office, City Mission of Schenectady, St. Madeleine Sophie School and the Alliance for Better Health.**

Agency Administration was overwhelmed by the unquestionable strength and character of our community. Bethesda House was and continues to be on the front-lines, we are encouraged by the outpouring of support that we received. Through collaboration and ingenuity, we are positioned to serve the homeless as we navigate through these unprecedented times.



Financial Summary

Bethesda House's 2019-2020 fiscal year ended strong with an operating surplus and overall increase in our contributed support.

The 2019-2020 fiscal year was tempered with the pandemic, which resulted in canceled fundraising events and other initiatives. However, the Agency was fortunate to remain financially stable as we navigated through the health crisis.

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, Stewart's Holiday Match, and The Community Foundation.**

The Agency Administration and Board of Directors will continue to explore initiatives to increase our contribution dollars, in order 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.

Kimarie Sheppard, Executive Director

Leina Minakawa, Director of Social Work

Louise O'Leary, Director of Program & Case Management Services

Danny Payne, Director of Residential Services





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