

2021 Annual Report

From the Executive Director

Our strength remains in adaptability to whatever circumstance comes our way! 2021 in review includes a great appreciation for the many dedicated roles that our community plays in our mission. Our donors and volunteers remain our lifeline, while our staff delivers programming with care, compassion and patience. The families that we serve are role models for strength, courage and inspiration. We all learn from each other and share in the many victories, no matter how big or small.

Challenges will never cease, but a constant in this community is the faith, time and many resources that our network contributes to ensure families have the opportunity to build healthier foundations for independence. Operating under a trauma-informed scope enables our families to truly thrive as we continually provide a holistic approach to homelessness and housing stabilization.

As we look into 2022, we continue to put emphasis on our core service of re-opening our emergency shelter while expanding our community outreach through Neighbors In Need. We will continue to bring awareness and education to the community about our services and the many benefits that can be identified by uniting for our mission.

With much gratitude,

Alyssa Martini



Executive Director



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Message from the Board of Trustees

On January 1, 2021, HOME of Somerset County was born, carrying forward the mission of the Interfaith Hospital Network as an independent, nonprofit agency. When we embarked on our name change, little did we know we'd be faced with promoting our mission during a public health crisis.

No one could predict the impact the COVID-19 virus would have on each of us, and on HOME of Somerset County. The second year of the crisis presented new challenges and new opportunities for us and the community that we serve.

Hurricane Ida devastated large sections of our county, forcing many families from their homes. With your generosity and support, we expanded our food security program. Long-time volunteers and new friends of HOME delivered meals and nonperishable food during the height of the crisis.

Perhaps our biggest challenge is finding affordable housing for our families in a market where so much was destroyed by water and wind. We rely on our faith and our friends to help us help those in need and find much hope in our success stories....the working single mother back in school for a degree and another mom celebrating a year of successful employment. Even in the most challenging times, we find light and hope.

We enter 2022 excited about our 30th anniversary gala on October 13 and the prospect of growing our services to meet the changing needs of our community. We thank you for your commitment and dedication to serving our families, helping us empower at-risk families to thrive independently.

Hope to see you at the Gala!

Dorothy Driscoll



President, Board of Trustees
HOME of Somerset County



2021 Board of Trustees

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Our Volunteer Impact

In 2021, you responded to the needs of 50 families in our emergency shelter and continuum of care programs.



Shelter

- ★ 17 Host congregations
- ★ 20 Support congregations



Resources

- ★ 1,095 Nights of shelter
- ★ 7,500+ Meals



Time

- ★ 2,100+ volunteer hours
- ★ Over 1,000 volunteers



Community Outreach

- ★ Food security assistance
- ★ Back-to-school supplies
- ★ Holiday support
- ★ Basic needs support
- ★ Clothing & furniture
- ★ Housing supplies
- ★ Transportation assistance
- ★ Tutoring services



EMPOWERING AT-RISK FAMILIES TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN
INDEPENDENCE THROUGH STRENGTH-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

A Continuum of Care that Empowers

Safe Shelter

Our Emergency Shelter provides housing, meals and basic needs through interfaith congregational hosting and support. Case management, financial counseling, mental health evaluation and community resource referrals are offered to families to increase life skills and access to resources.

- ★ One family served through hotel placement
- ★ 3 individuals, 2 children
- ★ 1,571 hours of case management



Transitional Housing

Sunrise House, located in Bridgewater, accommodates families who were previously in our Emergency Shelter and have prepared themselves for independence but find themselves stalled by the search for permanent, affordable housing. Individualized case plans are created, and basic needs are subsidized as families work on educational and employment goals.

- ★ 2 families served
- ★ 2 adults, 3 children
- ★ 1 adult pursuing a bachelor's in nursing degree
- ★ 1 adult maintained full-time employment
- ★ 628 hours of case management

Supportive Services

Phase 2 offers 18 months of continuing case management and support to clients who have transitioned to independent housing. This fills an identified gap in services to support newly housed families and prevent relapse back into homelessness.

- ★ 20 families served
- ★ 55 individuals, 30 children
- ★ 16 single mothers
- ★ 12 adults employed
- ★ 942 hours of case management



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A Continuum of Care that Empowers

Rapid Rehousing serves clients who have achieved independent housing. Clients receive Homelessness Trust Fund assistance and are considered at high risk of relapse back into homelessness. Clients receive individualized case management, financial counseling, basic needs support and mental health services.

- ★ 1 family served
- ★ All adults employed
- ★ 9 hours of case management

Sound Minds provides all clients, children and adults, with a psychiatric evaluation, mental health counseling and crisis intervention. Our counselor provides direct services to clients at our host congregations, as well as in-home counseling. All adults and children have access to mental health services and participate in consistent counseling. Eleven families participated in family therapy.



Daycare Plus funds children, infant through age five, to attend licensed and age-appropriate childcare and preschool at the Somerville YMCA at no cost to the parent(s). We offer this program service in partnership with the YMCA, which provides 50% of tuition scholarships to our referred children. HOME funds the additional 50% while offering case management and transportation from the program. Due to Covid-19, no children were placed at the YMCA.

Neighbors In Need provides families living in their own housing with stabilization resources with access to case management and financial counseling resources that are aimed at housing stabilization. Eligibility through independent referral allows low-income households to be assisted with mental health services and basic needs and food security supplementation. This program was established in late 2020 to increase community outreach.

- ★ 9 families served
- ★ 24 individuals, 14 children
- ★ High focus on food security and mental health services
- ★ 207.5 hours of case management



Clients Who Inspire

Her story is not unlike others in regarding to the many struggles she has had to endure due to poverty. What is unique to Hawa is her deep-seated will to survive through unimaginable circumstances. Born in Liberia, Africa, Hawa immediately faced the harsh reality of extreme poverty, famine and civil war. Surviving not one, but two civil wars within Africa led Hawa to seek asylum in the United States when she was 19 years old. While she seemingly had reached freedom, Hawa's trauma-filled childhood, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse, did not become a distant memory. Her trauma response based on cultural expectations and lack of resources paralyzed Hawa in a constant state of survival mode. She suffered several domestic violence situations, forcing Hawa and her children to constantly move. Maintaining any type of life for her children with barely an elementary school education meant that Hawa's choices

revolved around survival, regardless of the cost of her mental health and the constant triggering of her many traumas. Fast forward to 2019, Hawa found herself at the doorstep of HOME of Somerset County.



Homeless and tired but not quite ready to trust anyone, Hawa reluctantly accepted a spot in our emergency shelter. Looking back at her initial time at HOME, Hawa describes herself as being

impatient and intolerant. But she realized the safe, structured environment of HOME would be key to her eventual independence. After five months of persistent work on mental and physical wellness for the entire

family, educational goals and life skills, Hawa secured an apartment for her family. She continues in our Phase 2 program, which offers families who have transitioned out of our

emergency shelter continued intensive case management, financial counseling, mental health support and basic needs.

Hawa remains extremely grateful for her experience at HOME. "I have never experienced people like this before in my life", she states. "They are patient, caring and have provided love that I have never been given in my life. I am grateful for them changing my life for me and my children. They have given me courage when I thought that I could not get out of my situation. My education level is very poor, so the simple act of helping me with paperwork and documents has been empowering in moving my family forward."

Hawa adds that she has never respected people in her life as much as she does the staff of HOME and that her bondage of pain and depression has begun to be lifted based on this experience.



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A Community That Cares

Our partnerships throughout our community continued to benefit our at-risk families in 2021.



Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center in Bridgewater generously offered five of our HOME children summer camp scholarships to provide enrichment and recreation during the summer months.

The Sisterhood and Religious School of Temple Beth-El in Hillsborough donated Thanksgiving baskets with turkey dinners and all of the fixings for a warm holiday meal.



Gateway Gives Back! ensured that all of HOME kids were well-equipped for the school year.



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A Community That Cares

Our food security initiative was greatly supported by congregants of Bound Brook Presbyterian Church who donated ShopRite gift cards on a weekly basis. They also provided freshly prepared meals, breads, produce and other yummy treats that helped families fill their pantries.



It was another successful year for our Annual Calendar Raffle, as our community and congregational supporters purchased tickets and generously donated to benefit our programs.



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Hurricane Ida Support

HOME partnered with the Somerset County Department of Human Services to provide support for long-term Hurricane Ida victims. The devastation that this natural disaster caused was felt throughout the county and forced many from their homes. HOME provided intensive services for families identified by Human Services who became homeless and needed food, basic needs, clothing, advocacy and assistance accessing community resources. Through the generosity of our volunteer network, HOME formed a clothing pop-up shop as well as coordinated daily efforts for perishable and non-perishable food donations. HOME served seven families through this initiative.



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2021 Host and Support Congregations

Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church, *Basking Ridge*
Bishop Janes United Methodist Church, *Basking Ridge*
Bradley Gardens Reformed Church, *Bridgewater*
Bridgewater United Methodist Church, *Bridgewater*
Congregational Church of Bound Brook
Evangel Chapel, *Bridgewater*
Faith Lutheran Church, *Hillsborough*
Finderne Reformed Church, *Bridgewater*
First Baptist Church, *Somerville*
First United Methodist Church of Somerville
Garden State Sikh Association, *Bridgewater*
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, *Somerville*
Hillsborough Reformed Church, *Hillsborough*
Immaculate Conception RC Church, *Somerville*
Lamington Presbyterian Church, *Bedminster*
Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church, *Liberty Corner*
Liquid Church, *Somerville*
Mary Mother of God Roman Catholic Church, *Hillsborough*

Middlebush Reformed Church, *Middlebush*
Neshanic Reformed Church, *Neshanic Station*
North Branch Reformed Church, *Bridgewater*
Peapack Reformed Church, *Gladstone*
Pluckemin Presbyterian Church, *Pluckemin*
Presbyterian Church at Bound Brook
South Branch Reformed Church, *Hillsborough*
St. Ann's RC Church, *Raritan*
St. Bernards RC Church, *Bridgewater*
St. Brigid – St. Elizabeth, *Peapack & Far Hills*
St. Charles Borromeo RC Church, *Skillman*
St. James RC Church, *Basking Ridge*
St. Joseph's RC Church, *East Millstone*
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, *Bridgewater*
St. Mary of Czestochowa, *Bound Brook*
St. Matthias RC Church, *Somerset*
Temple Beth-El, *Hillsborough*
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills, *Somerville*



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Our Financial Contributors

