

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

✨ CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE ✨

Growing Community: Gold Award Project Blossoms at Sunrise House



Olivia, a dedicated Girl Scout working toward her Gold Award, has spent the past year bringing a beautiful vision to life for the families at Sunrise House. Her project began with a thoughtful planning phase, where she designed a fruit and vegetable garden that would give residents access to fresh produce, hands-on learning, and a welcoming outdoor space to enjoy.

With careful preparation, Olivia built and planted the garden. She created raised beds, selected nutritious fruits and vegetables, and ensured the layout would be easy for families to maintain. She also incorporated a sustainability plan so the garden can continue thriving long after her project is complete, giving future residents the same opportunity to learn and grow.

To help families make the most of the harvest, Olivia hosted a cooking class at Sunrise House, teaching simple, healthy recipes. She also created a newsletter filled with tips, produce information, and family-friendly recipes to help residents feel confident exploring fresh foods at home.

Olivia's Gold Award project is more than a garden, it's a gift of nourishment, education, and community. Her leadership and compassion have planted something meaningful at Sunrise House, and we are so grateful for the lasting impact her work will have on our families.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The Journey Continues... Supporting Families in Phase 2

For many families, securing independent housing is a major milestone. This is a victory that reflects months of hard work, resilience, and partnership with HOME's emergency shelter and case management programs. But stability doesn't end at move-in. That's where Phase 2 begins.

Phase 2 provides continued, intensive case management for families transitioning from the emergency shelter into their own homes. This next step is designed to strengthen long-term stability by ensuring families have the tools, resources, and support they need to thrive in their new environment.

Through Phase 2, families receive ongoing financial counseling, helping them build budgets, repair credit, manage debt, and establish healthy financial habits. Case managers also support food security, connecting households to local food banks, nutrition programs, and emergency resources so no family has to choose between rent and groceries.

Most importantly, Phase 2 reinforces the trauma-informed foundation of HOME's work. Many families continue to navigate the long-term impacts of homelessness, domestic violence, medical crises, or generational instability. Regular check-ins, goal-setting, and individualized case plans help families stay focused, supported, and empowered as they build a new chapter of independence.

Many families in Phase 2 are part of HOME long after goals are met and housing is obtained. As such in life, circumstances present themselves that can impact housing later on, such as serious illness, natural disasters and other hardships.

Becoming part of families' foundational support allows us to support them in these unanticipated times of need. Extending care beyond the emergency shelter through this support ensures that families don't just find housing, they keep it. It is a vital part of HOME's continuum of services, strengthening stability, preventing future homelessness, and helping families move confidently toward long-term success.

New Jersey Community Fund by Johnson and Johnson Supports HOME's Health-Focused Case Management

HOME of Somerset County is grateful to once again receive funding from the New Jersey Community Fund by Johnson & Johnson, which has supported our medical and mental health case management services for more than ten years. This award also helps fund Sound Minds, HOME's program focused on addressing the mental health needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Physical and mental health challenges are among the leading contributors to housing instability and homelessness. Through this longstanding partnership, HOME provides comprehensive case management that helps clients overcome barriers to housing and well-being. Over the years, HOME has assisted clients facing cancer diagnoses, supported children with developmental needs, and helped survivors recover from injuries related to domestic violence, ensuring they receive appropriate medical care, behavioral health services, and community supports.

We are deeply thankful to the New Jersey Community Fund by Johnson & Johnson for its continued commitment to helping vulnerable individuals and families improve their health, achieve stability, and build hopeful futures.

The Heart of HOME: Our Congregation Network

HOME of Somerset County is fortunate to be supported by a network of interfaith communities that strengthen our mission in countless ways. Congregations provide nightly shelter, financial contributions, meals, household necessities, volunteers, advocacy, holiday support and ongoing encouragement to families experiencing homelessness. These examples of support continue to benefit families beyond the emergency shelter, as they complete goals and transition into our other case management programs, such as Phase 2.

We extend a special thank you to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills for their generous donation. Jill recently had the opportunity to address the congregation and share about how impactful our partnership is. Their giving spirit directly strengthens our work with families, and we are grateful to partner with a community that consistently shows up with compassion and purpose.

Jill also had the pleasure in October of speaking at Hillsborough Reformed Church, who has served as a host congregation for over 20 years. As community needs continue to grow, we are eager to expand our congregation network. If you belong to, or know of, a faith community interested in making a local impact, we would welcome an introduction. Together, we can ensure more families have the support they need to achieve housing stability and brighter futures.



Pictured are Michelle Edgar (Community Plate), Jill Segulin (HOME Community & Operations Coordinator), and Rev. Dr. Mary Early-Zald.

THANK YOU!

On October 6, **Stoney Brook Grille** in North Branch generously hosted a Dine-to-Donate event benefiting HOME. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Stoney Brook Grille for their partnership and to everyone who chose to dine and give back that day.