

Bethany House

Annual Report 2023
A Year of Transition and Growth



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maryanne Pedersen".

Maryanne Pedersen
Board Chair

This has been a year of transition and growth for Bethany House as we welcomed a new Executive Director, opened our new transitional housing option, and expanded our mental health programming and training.

In August 2023, we said farewell to Douglas O'Dell, our Executive Director who first came to Bethany House in September 2019. During his tenure, Doug strengthened the Board and its committee structure, improved systems of accountability, community connections and the case management process. He was a visionary in believing that Bethany House could do more than provide housing, meals and case management to the women and children we serve by partnering with the community and private funders to break the cycle of homelessness. Thank you, Doug, for your incredible leadership and service to Bethany House.

We are incredibly fortunate to have enticed Catherine ("Katie") Swanson from the government sector, to continue to advance Bethany's mission. Katie comes to us with two decades of experience in serving the needs of people experiencing homelessness on Long Island. We are excited to support her in implementing her vision in the coming years.



Douglas O'Dell, outgoing ED



Sincerely,



Katie Swanson
Executive Director

Thank you to the Board of Directors for trusting me to lead Bethany House in its mission to serve women and children experiencing homelessness, and to the staff who have been so welcoming. I have worked with the homeless population for over 20 years as a government official overseeing the homeless system for Nassau County. In August of 2023 I decided to leave government and enter the private sector. I felt that it was time to work with those experiencing homelessness on a smaller scale and use all the skills and insight I have gained over the years to make a true impact.

Homelessness is a complex issue, which many times has more to do with the trauma someone has experienced throughout their lives, than the availability of affordable housing. When people experience housing insecurity, they go into a survival mode, every night worrying about where they will sleep, what they will eat and how they will get through the social service system to get the benefits they need.

If we can provide programming that will help heal their trauma, address their mental health and teach money management, we will have given women the tools to enable them to navigate society successfully. The government gives us money to operate at a basic level, but so much more is needed if we truly want to end the cycle of homelessness. I have many ideas that I know will be effective, and I have already implemented them on a small scale. The first of these is addressing mental health and the stigma and misinformation around engaging in services. We recently hired a well-regarded mental health trainer to provide a series of psychoeducation workshops to the women residing in our shelters, and it was an outstanding success! I look forward to bringing you more news about innovative and effective programming.

Bethany House provides a safe place for healing and personal growth for women, and women with children, experiencing homelessness. It is built on a foundation of community support to provide a continuum of care, from uncertainty to stability.

Through our partnerships, we provide the women in our programs with trauma informed services, in-house and community-based health services, and case management focused on securing educational and employment growth opportunities and a path to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

We strive for our guests and their children to experience a sense of self-worth and belonging in response to their experience with our dedicated staff and volunteers.

Founded in 1978, Bethany House supports women, and women with children, on Long Island who are experiencing homelessness. We provide a continuum of care to take these individuals from uncertainty to stability.

At its core, Safe Ground for Families is a three-tiered, multi-generational program that seeks to break the cycle of homelessness. The three steps are:

- **Step I:** Emergency shelter and case management – food, clothing and shelter; child and family recreation; social work; milieu treatment; maintenance; meal preparation; program and volunteer coordination and health services offered directly by Bethany House with the support of the Nassau County Department of Social Services and corporate and community-based organizations
- **Step II:** Transitional living services, and semi-independent living provided in a Bethany House residence (opened August 2023) – Women’s Empowerment Groups; individual and family counseling; early childhood services provided in partnership with universities and other community-based organizations
- **Step III:** Independent living with optional support services, aftercare services, provided by Bethany House and funded through foundations, grants and contributions.

With this approach, we provide services intended to prevent **homelessness recidivism**, ensure **child health and wellness**, enable the achievement of **educational and career goals**, facilitate **secure employment with sustainable income**, and enable **greater earning potential**, and thus, the ability to **build savings**.

Bethany House would not be able to provide the array of services we do without the assistance and support of many partners. These include:

- **Nassau County Department of Social Services** – our primary referral source, our consultants in addressing the myriad challenges our guests face.
- **NYC Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance** – our State Oversight Agency and partner in ensuring that our programming and environment meet their rigorous standards.
- **Local Universities** – who provide us with excellent student interns in social services, nursing and public relations, and we provide them with a stimulating hands-on learning environment, supported by expert supervision.
- **Public and Private Elementary, Middle and High School PTAs and Honor Societies** – who conduct fundraising and household supply drives to benefit Bethany House, and who also provide volunteer services, tutoring, organizing and babysitting.
- **Houses of Worship** – who remember the women and children during holidays and other times with gifts, goody bags, cakes, dinners, and activities both on-site and in the community.
- **Local Businesses in Real Estate, Insurance, Retail** and other areas – who generously donate catered meals, conduct fundraising drives among their staff, and find other creative ways to show they are deeply concerned about their neighbors.
- **Private and Corporate Foundations** – who provide funds to allow us to introduce innovative programming and enriched staffing ratios.
- **Individual Donors and Volunteers** – who touch the hearts of our staff and the women and children with their incredibly generous outreach and willingness to donate their time, energy and resources.

After a year of careful planning, we opened our Safe Ground for Families Step II Transitional Housing in August 2023

- We identified a need for a program that would afford highly motivated women with the safety, security and additional time they needed to complete career, educational and financial goals before moving into permanent housing.
- The Step II Transitional Housing program operates outside the County social service system, to avoid the time and work constrictions and sometimes onerous “county share” women must pay the County from their earnings, which does not allow them to accumulate an emergency fund to ensure future housing stability.
- This program is wholly funded through grants, contributions, and small client rent payments. The initial generous funding was provided by the Hagedorn Foundation and a subcontract under Molloy University’s Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grant.
- Additional funding has been provided by grants from Santander Bank and Capital One. In fact, Capital One was so impressed by the Step II Transitional Housing concept, that they spontaneously invited Bethany House to apply for a grant that was three times their usual grant size.
- We welcomed three women with children in 2023, and they are all thriving!



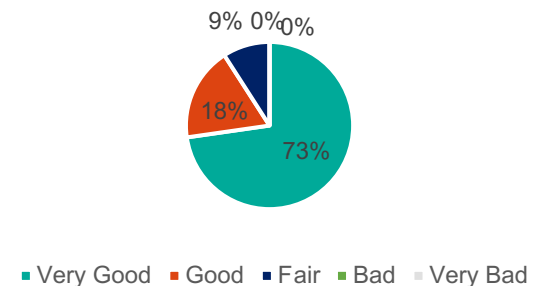
Bethany Transition House Common Areas

Although we have always collected exit surveys from guests who are willing to share their feedback, in March 2023 we implemented an annual guest satisfaction survey to capture guests' feedback about the homes, the services and the staff.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 95% rated their **Progress toward Goals** as very good or good
- 91% rated the **Environment** as very good or good
- 91% rated **Case Management** services as very good or good
- 89% rated **Services for Children** as very good or good
- 86% feel **Safe and Secure** in the house
- 82% of guests rated their **Overall Experience** at Bethany House as “very good” or “good”; 14% rated it as “fair”

Case Management



SAMPLE COMMENTS: *“Having people in my corner to help me get to where I need to be” • “A roof over my head and meals and the motivation I have received here. I have learned a lot here.” • “Obtained vital documents, housing applications, medical referrals, job placement.”*

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT: Meals were the only service that received lower than 70% positive ratings (very good or good). Since that time, we have made an increased effort to vary the ethnicity of the meals that are cooked or are delivered to the houses, as well as improve the nutritional value and quality of the meals, all with active input from guests.

In 2023, we:

- Continued to implement our vision of creating a **three-step approach to service delivery, entitled, “Safe Ground for Families Transitional Services and Housing,”** which expands our services beyond emergency shelter and case management, to enhanced support for education and career development so that women, and women with children, can break the cycle of homelessness.
- **Opened our Step II Transitional Housing** in August 2023 for highly motivated women, and women with children, to reside in our Bethany West home outside the social service system, so that they may further develop their education and career goals, as well as save money to ensure housing stability once they obtain permanent housing. We welcomed three women with children in 2023.
- Finalized leases with the assistance of pro bono counsel for our **Step III Permanent Housing** in our Bellmore apartment building; partnered with CDC LI for screening and financial education of tenants with Section 8 vouchers.
- Effected a **smooth transition of the Executive Director position**, from our outgoing ED, Douglas O’Dell, to our incoming ED, Catherine (“Katie”) Swanson.
- Implemented an **annual Guest Satisfaction Survey**, in addition to our exit surveys for the purpose of: gathering guests’ feedback about the facilities, the services and the staff; developing action plans to address areas of concern; and reporting the results to the Board, the staff and the guests.
- Formalized our **Aftercare Services** to ensure housing stability, initially funded through Molloy University’s Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grant and now supported through other grants and donations; we have a Case Manager assigned to follow up quarterly with “graduates” to offer support and limited case management services and emergency funding.
- **Continued to expand our list of partnerships** with volunteers, community-based service organizations, corporate partners, foundations and individual donors.

The benefits of the enhanced case management services are exemplified in the discharge summary for one of our recent “graduates.” The narrative below reflects comprehensive, holistic services.

Two years ago, Elizabeth found herself homeless and reached out for help. After going through the often-dehumanizing process to apply for emergency housing, she and her twin baby girls arrived at Bethany House. Like many of our guests, when she first came to Bethany House, she felt very alone. Her future, and that of her children, was completely uncertain.

As soon as she was settled in, Bethany House sprang into action and supported Elizabeth and her girls while they began their healing process. Our dedicated social worker helped Elizabeth enroll in a course to become a home health aide, and to identify places in the community where Elizabeth and her daughters could receive help based on their specific needs. While this supportive community was being established, and Elizabeth and her twins flourished, our social worker was able to secure affordable housing for them.

Earlier this year, Elizabeth and her twins moved into their own two- bedroom apartment! For the very first time in their short lives, her twins will have their own bedroom, and Elizabeth will have her own space to unwind and recharge each day. After two empowering, enriching years at Bethany House, Elizabeth and her girls are living on their own, and have started their journey as an independent, stable, secure family.



The following is an overview of Bethany House's income and expenses for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023.

Total Support & Revenue:	\$2,977,576
Program Expenses:	\$1,928,504
Management & General Expenses:	\$ 355,008
Fundraising Expenses:	<u>\$ 39,920</u>
Total Expenses:	\$2,323,432
Total Assets:	\$3,939,758
Total Liabilities:	\$ 124,743
Ending Net Assets:	\$3,818,015

Bethany House of Nassau County Corporation is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Chairperson
Vice Chair & Treasurer
Secretary
Members

Maryanne Pedersen
Bonnie Ryan Arrante
Ellen Furuya
Lennae Adams
Martin Baicker
Lisa King
James Lowe
Kia Moore
Christine Vetrano
Angela Zimmerman

PHOTOS on Cover Page: **Top Row**, "Relationships" Theatre Event for Guests, Bethany House Case Managers at LICH Keys Conference, Bombas Giving Partner Program, Fashion Show 2023 Models; **Bottom Row** – Coleigne Solomon (Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Project CRADLE Care), Garden Tour 2023, Molloy University Students Reading Program, Jahmeir Tillery (Eagle Scout Backyard Improvement Project), Portledge School Students (Goods Drive)



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