

FRONT PORCH

NEWS | Summer 2023

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

YEARS OF IMPACT
40
BETHANY
house services

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OUR MISSION

Bethany House Services empowers homeless and at-risk families with the solutions to achieve housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

OUR VISION

To live in a community where all families have a place to call home and no one spends a night without shelter.

CORE VALUES

Respect, Empowerment, Integrity, Excellence, Collaboration and Hospitality.

DEAR FRIENDS,



Bethany House was founded 40 years ago this month with a hope and a prayer: that single women and children without homes would have a safe place to stay.

The organization has grown exponentially in the past four decades, but it has never lost this founding focus. Whether through homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, or permanent supportive housing, Bethany House continues to help families weather life's storms and prepare them for long-term success.

And though we now serve men in both shelter and housing programs, nearly 90% of families served are led by single women. Bethany House remains especially attuned to the needs of women and children.

This newsletter illuminates the past, present, and future of Bethany House's mission.

You'll read about the intrepid founders of Bethany House, Sr. Dee Sizler and Sr. Mary Grafe, and see the organization's evolution from a small shelter to the largest provider of family homelessness services in the region.

You'll read about how Bethany House secures housing for shelter families, ensures children experiencing homelessness have fun summers, and utilizes volunteers to respond to families' emerging needs.

And you'll read about Bethany House's first Board Chair, Diane Park—and her late husband Dick, decided to leave a gift in their will to ensure future generations of families in need would have a safe place to stay.

Thank you for being on this journey with us. As Bethany House enters its fifth decade, I know our founding hope and prayer is stronger because of your support and generosity.

Sincerely,

Peg Dierkers
Chief Executive Officer

Bethany House Wins City Impact Award

Bethany House—as part of a coalition with partners Strategies to End Homelessness, Found House Interfaith Hospitality Network, Lighthouse Youth and Family Services, YWCA of Greater Cincinnati, and Legal Aid Society—was awarded a \$2.1MM Impact Award from the City of Cincinnati’s Human Services Fund.

This Impact Award is a new, three-year initiative from the city that seeks to enhance work to prevent evictions and homelessness. Bethany House and its partners won a competitive application process against numerous other organizations.

This project, titled the Cincinnati Family Housing Stabilization Collaborative, will use predictive analytics to determine the household characteristics most likely to lead to eviction or homelessness. The Collaborative will then proactively reach out to these families to offer wraparound services including case management and rent or utility assistance.

Simultaneously, partner organizations will also work to strengthen relationships with landlords and property managers to maximize the limited amount of affordable housing units in our community.

With over 12,500 evictions in Cincinnati last year and over 800 filed alone last month, this initiative is critical to keeping Cincinnati’s most vulnerable families safely housed and out of the shelter system.

Bethany House is honored to receive this award and thrilled to be working closely with many key collaborators on this project. We look forward to sharing updates in the months to come!

Cincinnati Family Housing Stabilization Collaborative Project Outcomes



Reduce evictions for families and children



Reduce community costs associated with evictions



Maximize limited housing supply



Create better quality of life for all Cincinnati residents

The Importance of Housing Specialists

Bethany House’s dedicated “housing specialists” are at the forefront of efforts to secure affordable and safe housing for families transitioning out of shelter.

These individuals focus on finding suitable housing units for families and establishing strong relationships with landlords and property owners. Building these relationships is essential not only for accessing information about available housing options but also for providing landlords with a deeper understanding of the support structures and services Bethany House offers to families moving into housing.

Furthermore, housing specialists assist clients in developing personalized housing plans, connecting them with potential landlords, managing lease agreements, and overseeing housing inspections prior to leasing. Their goal is to ensure a smooth and swift transition from emergency shelter to leased apartments.

As a result, they must stay informed about the current availability of permanent affordable housing in the community and work to expand Bethany House’s network of property owners and contacts in affordable housing.



Demetrious Pleasure
Shelter Housing Specialist

As the demand for family homelessness services increases and eviction rates remain high, housing specialists continue to play a critical, unique role in helping families achieve housing stability.

40 years of Impact

“I told her I was thinking about working with the homeless...”

So said Sr. Mary Grafe to Sr. Dee Sizler when they met at a global gathering of the Sisters of Charity in February of 1983.

Five months later, Sr. Mary and Sr. Dee had secured a house, and on July 20, 1983, the first family seeking shelter moved into Bethany House of Hospitality. The journey was just beginning.

The Early Years

Sr. Mary and Sr. Dee always meant for Bethany House to be a different kind of shelter. They identified a unique need for single women with children to have a safe place to stay during housing crises.

In the initial years, Sr. Mary and Sr. Dee—along with a lay person (not a religious sister) named Barb Poppe—lived in the house with the women and children. Sr. Dee was Bethany House’s Director, and Sr. Mary and Barb had additional jobs which helped pay for food, supplies, and other hospitality needs.

Bethany House itself moved a few times before finding a stable home. It was first located on Woodburn Avenue in Evanston, then on Hollister Avenue in Clifton, and finally on Fairmount Avenue where it remained from 1987 to 2022.

In these early years, family stays were short compared to today (only up to six weeks) but much

longer compared to the only other option at the time—two weeks maximum at the Salvation Army. Because of the organization’s immediate impact and these short stays, Bethany House was already serving hundreds of people each year by only its third year of existence.

The Growth Years

Though Sr. Dee and Sr. Mary remained involved, they were called to other ministries in years after the founding, and Sr. Mary Stanton—a Sister of Mercy—became Bethany House’s Director in 1985. She led the organization for nearly 30 years.

The organization officially changed its name in 1989 from Bethany House of Hospitality to Bethany House Services to acknowledge support offered to families beyond “only” shelter.

In 1994, Bethany House opened Bethany Homes, a 24-unit apartment building of affordable housing in Westwood which is still open today.

As the 21st century arrived, Sr. Mary and Bethany House recognized the need to do even more to ensure families were stable and self-sufficient after leaving shelter.

Bethany House helped launch the Family Housing Partnership with other local family shelters, and in 2010, Bethany House secured its first permanent supportive housing contract. Thirteen years later, Bethany House now serves over 450 families (1500+ individuals) each year through its housing programs.

Growth continued under the leadership of Susan Schiller, who became Executive Director in 2013.

November 1983:
Bethany House
incorporates
as a nonprofit
organization



Bethany Homes
opens

1983

1987

1989

1994



Bethany House
moves to Fairmount
Avenue, where it
remains for 35 years

Bethany House
changes its name
to Bethany House
Services.



Bethany House took over Mercy Health-St. John's family shelter and housing program in 2015 and then added another shelter location in 2018.

From 2015 to 2022, Bethany House nearly quintupled in size and had seven buildings scattered across Cincinnati—five shelter locations and two administrative buildings.

The Next 40 Years

Bethany House's new shelter and comprehensive services center opened in September 2022, consolidating seven buildings all under one roof. With 43 single family bedrooms, extensive wraparound services, robust re-housing, and expanded homelessness prevention, the organization is poised to deepen its service to families for decades to come.

Bethany House now serves families of all configurations—single parents, two parent households, multi-generational families, and more—but the founding priorities remain: nearly 90% of families are led by single women and 67% of the people served by Bethany House are children.

Over the past 40 years, Bethany House has grown from the small, faith-filled initiative of two Catholic sisters to the largest provider of family homelessness services in Greater Cincinnati.

As the needs of families continue to evolve in the coming decades, Bethany House will remain steadfast as a place of refuge, hope, and empowerment.



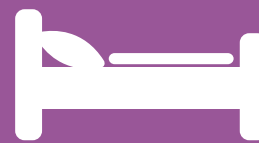
26,000+

Total adults receiving shelter since 1985



16,000+

Total children receiving shelter since 1985



725,000+

Total nights of stay in shelter since 1985

Bethany House starts permanent supportive housing services.

October 2022: Bethany House opens its new shelter and comprehensive services center, located in Bond Hill



2000

2010

2015

2022

2000: Bethany House forms the Family Housing Partnership with YWCA, Salvation Army, and Found House.



2015: Bethany House takes over Mercy Health-St. John's family shelter and housing programs

Family Services Summer Fun!



As the summer unfolds and children across Greater Cincinnati enjoy the joy and freedom it brings, it's important to remember those for whom summer isn't always a time of fun and adventure. Among them are Bethany House children, whose challenges go beyond the absence of a permanent home.

At Bethany House, the Family Services Department works hard to provide normalcy for children when school is in session and during the summer. This summer, kids living in shelter have been involved in a variety of camps, field trips, and "public adventures" to get them outside of the shelter during the day.

One of the primary benefits of field trips for children experiencing homelessness is the opportunity to step outside their current situation and explore new horizons. These experiences offer a break from the stress and challenges they may face daily and an opportunity to let kids be kids!

Bethany House kids have already visited Kings Island, the Newport Aquarium, COSI, and Jungle Jims and will be visiting the Cincinnati Zoo, and more in the coming weeks.

A special thanks to AAA for inviting Bethany House to be a part of the annual AAA Children's Outing at Kings Island at the end of June. Enjoy these fun photos from the trip!



Volunteer Spotlight : Joann Brady

Bethany House is fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who go above and beyond to make a positive impact. One such individual is Joann Brady, a retired private mortgage consultant who started volunteering in February 2023.

Joann's willingness, altruism, and eagerness to help have made her an invaluable asset to Bethany House and its families. When Joann first began her volunteer journey, she wasn't quite sure how her expertise could best benefit families living in shelter.

However, seeking to meet families' needs, she and her friend, Lisa Carter, created a money management program. This program was designed specifically to help families meet their financial goals and improve their financial literacy.

But Joann's impact does not stop with financial literacy. She is also a board member of Saint

John Baptist Church and spearheaded a number in-kind donations Bethany House families with more on the way.

Thank you to Joann—and many other Bethany House volunteers—who go above and beyond in their care and commitment to families in need!



Caring for Future Generations of Families

Diane and Dick Park have a special place in Bethany House's history, and we were thrilled to honor them last month at the Voices of Giving Awards, held at the Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

Voices of Giving is a local event honoring community members who have committed gifts in their wills, trusts, or other estate plans to local nonprofits. Diane and Dick were recognized along with 16 other couples and individuals for their generous commitment.

Diane—Bethany House's first Board Chair—and her late husband Dick, have been involved at Bethany House since its founding and have long provided for the needs of families in crisis. By choosing to leave a gift in their will, they are helping ensure that future generations of families will also find the housing support they need and deserve!

If you are interested in learning more about leaving a gift to Bethany House or have already committed a gift in your will, trust, or other estate plans, please contact Daniel Flynn at 513-557-2214 or dflynn@bhsinc.org.



Diane was unable to attend Voices of Giving so her two sons and their families received the award in her honor. From L to R: Peg Dierkers, Benjamin Park, Charlie Park, Brad Park, Andy Park, Lynn Park, Hunter Park, Daniel Flynn

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SAVE
THE
DATE



Bethany House Services 40th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, October 12 6-10pm



The Spot on West Fifth
337 W 5th St., Cincinnati, 45202

FEATURING Cincinnati's most famous mixologist, **Molly Wellmann**, who will be crafting three signature Bethany House cocktails for attendees to enjoy!

HONORING

- The Dater Foundation
- Gail Myers
- Project Connect
- Mike Haverkamp and Good Shepherd Catholic Church

Visit bethanyhouseservices.org/40thanniversary or call 513-824-8044 for more information about sponsorship opportunities



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