



FRONT PORCH

NEWS | Spring 2024



**New Partnerships,
New Plans,
New Starts**

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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 is living the phrase “spring into the new” in a serious way right now! I want to briefly highlight four ways this is happening:

New Leaders

Bethany House’s enhanced growth and impact would not have been possible in recent years without strong board leadership. I want to thank Carolyn Washburn (chair), Lucy Crane (vice-chair), and Nahamani Yisrael (secretary) for their dedication and guidance while also welcoming new board leaders: Peg

Moertl (chair), Katie Kitchin (vice-chair), and Vincent Boddy (secretary). I am thrilled that Tom Wiandt will continue as board treasurer.

Additionally, you will read in this newsletter about three new members of Bethany House’s staff leadership team: **Roderick “Rod” Hinton, Jessica Starr, and Angela Knighten**. They all come with significant professional experience and accolades and a deep commitment to our mission.

New Partners

The number of new corporations, schools, churches, and individuals reaching out to Bethany House continues to grow. I am grateful for the financial donations, in-kind donations, volunteer activities, and more that these partners bring. Two of Bethany House’s newest and richest partnerships are with **BT Rise** and **Butterfly Support Services**, whom you’ll read about here.

New Plans

Bethany House passed a new three-year Strategic Plan in December that challenges the organization to deepen services and impact in a post-COVID world. You will read more here about our three overarching goals to **Grow Diverse Sustainable Resources, Expand Safe Affordable Housing Options, and Achieve Long-Term Family Well-Being**.

New Starts

Finally, Bethany House has always been about helping families—especially women and children—to find new homes and have new starts.

Any other “newness” is rooted in this purpose. Thank you for the new and old ways you push Bethany House forward and help families find new starts.

Sincerely,

Peg Dierkers
Chief Executive Officer

A New Home and New Start

Lakuvya and her son, Steven, became homeless when her husband abruptly left. Lakuvya didn’t work outside the home and had no way to cover the rent.

In a race against time, Lakuvya was referred to Bethany House through Project Connect, a Bethany House partner that works in Cincinnati Public Schools.

Bethany House acted swiftly, providing Lakuvya and Steven with immediate shelter and support. But their dog, Faith, could not come with them! However, thanks to Bethany House’s partnership with Found House, Faith found a safe, temporary home.

During her stay at Bethany House, Lakuvya attended life skills courses and found solace in a community of women sharing similar experiences. These sessions became a platform for self-discovery and acceptance, empowering Lakuvya to embrace her identity and rebuild her confidence.

Through her resilience and the support she received, Lakuvya secured employment and permanent housing. In March, she and Steven joyfully moved into their new home—and reunited with Faith.

Lakuvya credits Bethany House for providing her with the chance to breathe, connect with others, and rebuild her life with renewed strength and gratitude.

Read more about Found House’s Pet Support Program here: foundhouse.org/pets.





Celebrating Women's History Month with BT Rise

A New Orleans Party in Northern Kentucky



One of Bethany House's newest and richest partnerships is with BT Rise.

Founded in 2023 by Barbara Turner, the former CEO of Ohio National Financial Services and an accomplished business leader, BT Rise champions the economic empowerment of women and people of color.

In just the last year, BT Rise has supported Bethany House in a variety of new ways.

They have provided two grants specifically to help families move into their new homes after shelter. They have volunteered throughout Bethany House, including preparing and serving multiple meals.



And they have inspired the families living at Bethany House.

Most recently, in early March BT Rise came to a shelter meeting at Bethany House to celebrate Women's History Month. Barbara briefly shared her story and encouraged everyone in the room—especially the women—to dream and to work to make these dreams a reality.

BT Rise also brought generous gift bags with new robes, underwear, and purses for all the women.

Thank you, BT Rise, for your support of Bethany House and our clients and for helping recognize the strength of women during Women's History Month!



The 33rd Annual Mardi Gras for Homeless Children, held on February 13th, 2024, at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, was a resounding success!

Bethany House was again part of this raucous event, hosted by the Northern Kentucky Restaurant Association, along with Welcome House of Northern Kentucky and Brighton Center. Mardi Gras brings together nearly 1,500 guests and more than 50 top local food and drink vendors for a night of celebration, fun, and impact.

This year's event raised over \$230,000 to help shelter, feed, and stabilize families experiencing homelessness in our community—including those at Bethany House.

Thank you for the support of our sponsors, volunteers, donors, and all participants. We look forward to celebrating again next year!



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Planning for the Next Three Years

In December 2023, Bethany House’s Board of Directors adopted a new Strategic Plan to guide the organization’s direction and operations for the next three years. The three major pillars of this new plan are as follows:

GOAL 1

Grow Diverse Sustainable Resources

Bethany House will ensure organizational stability by retaining and developing a diverse workforce, growing revenue annually, and improving the organization’s brand recognition regionally.

GOAL 2

Expand Safe Affordable Housing Options

Bethany House will further address the housing crisis by evaluating Bethany Homes (24-unit apartment building), scaling its housing program, and developing 50 new units of affordable housing.

GOAL 3

Achieve Long-Term Family Well-Being

Bethany House will address other barriers to long-term stability by enhancing workforce development, creating a transportation program, expanding mental health access, and exploring on-site childcare.

New Partnership for Therapeutic Services



Bethany House has partnered with Butterfly Support Services to offer group therapeutic services for school-aged children four days a week, which started in December 2023.

Butterfly’s expertise in emotional well-being and social skills complements Bethany House’s mission. This partnership expands on-site mental health services and supports children’s emotional well-being, healthy development, and coping skills

to navigate life’s challenges effectively and build resilient futures for a brighter tomorrow.

A CALL FOR SNACKS!



Though Bethany House provides three meals and one snack each day for families living in shelter, it turns kids are hungry at other times too!

We are asking for your help stocking our kitchenette with nonperishable, healthy snacks for kids and families. Individually sized snack items such as crackers, granola bars, nuts, chips, or more would be greatly appreciated.

If you are able to donate—or organize a donation drive—please contact Maribel Pergola at 513-813-4222 or mpergola@bhsinc.org.

Get to Know Bethany House’s Newest Leadership Team Members

Roderick “Rod” Hinton



Title: Chief Program Officer

Previous Role: Chief Program Officer, Best Point

Fun Fact: “I was born with red/golden hair, which is why I was given my middle name, DeMaunn (demon).”

What excites you about Bethany House: “I have spent my career serving missions like Bethany House’s that improve the lives of at-risk populations and am excited to collaborate with an exceptional BHS team that is committed to producing the outcomes we espouse to clients, partners, donors, and other key stakeholders.”

Jessica Starr



Title: Human Resources Director

Previous Role: Human Resources and Wellness Consultant

Fun Fact: “My family and I love our rescue pets. We currently have 3 dogs, a senior cat, and six rescued chickens!”

What excites you about Bethany House: “I am thrilled to be back in mission driven services. Bethany House’s continuing positive impact on the community makes me very proud to be here!”

Angela Knighten



Title: Shelter Director

Previous Role: Enrollment and Family Service Coordinator, Hamilton County ESC

Fun Fact: My guilty pleasure is finding or generating recipes, crafts, gift ideas, or anything fun and unique to release my creative energy on.

Excited about BHS: “I am beyond excited to bring my knowledge, talents, and experience to Bethany House because I believe in healthy families and communities and feel this is a place where I can work collaboratively to achieve these goals.”

Homelessness at the Supreme Court

There is a case before the US Supreme Court—*Grants Pass v. Johnson*—that could dramatically impact people experiencing homelessness.

A ruling in favor of Grants Pass would allow cities to criminalize sleeping outside when shelters are full. Bethany House is strongly against any criminalization of homelessness, as this will exacerbate rather than alleviate cycles of poverty and marginalization.

In this case, the Supreme Court has the chance to affirm that the role of local government is to make room for everyone, not just some.



Bethany House Services
4769 Reading Road
Cincinnati, OH 45237
513-921-1131
bethanyhouseservices.org



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April is National Volunteer Month, and Bethany House is thrilled to celebrate the volunteers of all kinds who support families!

If you have considered being a volunteer or want to know more about ways you can support families at Bethany House, please reach out to Maribel Zayas Pergola, Volunteer Coordinator, at 513-813-4222 or mpergola@bhsinc.org.

Why I volunteer at Bethany House

"The time spent with these children in an organized and creative time slot is impactful and meaningful—for both the children and for me."

-Audrey Stehle

"Spending time with the children is the best part of my week."

-Sophia Helson

"I hope to bring a bit of happiness to someone's day."

-Susan Skidmore