



STORIES OF STRENGTH



REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE
2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FOREWORD FROM JIM AND SHANNON

Dear Friend,

We are thrilled to present to you our Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, a testament to the unwavering commitment of our organization to serve people as they move from homeless to housed.

As we thought of how to package an entire year of our work for you, we kept coming back to the individual stories of Carpenter's Shelter's work and mission. We are immensely proud of the year's accomplishments. This report shares the strides we've made in **expanding our support to more families** as well as our efforts to move all people (families and singles) into permanent housing. Our ability to support more families would not have been possible without the catalytic support from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund and we are most grateful for that.

Our mission has always been rooted in providing comprehensive assistance to those facing housing instability and ensuring that every person has a place to call home. The efforts of our residents, the dedication of our volunteers, board, and staff, and the generosity of our donors are all instrumental in driving our success.

In this Annual Report, you will find detailed insights into our programs, impact metrics, success stories, and financial transparency. We hope that this comprehensive overview will not only showcase the progress we've made, but also inspire your continued support and collaboration in our efforts to end homelessness in our community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated board members, passionate staff, compassionate volunteers, generous donors, and invaluable community partners for their support and commitment to our mission. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of families in need, and we are excited to continue this journey of transformation and impact.

Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in our mission.
Together, we are building a brighter future for people experiencing homelessness.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature of Jim Taylor in cursive, written in black ink.

Jim Taylor
Chair, Board of Directors



A handwritten signature of Shannon Steene in cursive, written in black ink.

Shannon Steene
Executive Director

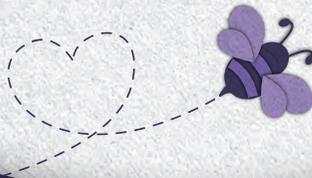
OUR MAIN PLOT

MISSION

Carpenter's Shelter supports people experiencing and at risk of homelessness to achieve sustainable independence through shelter and housing placement and guidance, education, and advocacy.

VISION

For homelessness to be eradicated in the communities we serve.



Solutions
through collaboration

Empowerment

An illustration of a young boy with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a blue jacket and blue pants, sitting on a large green plant. He is holding a purple watering can and pouring water onto the plant. The background is a large white circle with three small purple flowers. The scene is set against a green and blue background with a brown ground area at the bottom.

SEED VALUES

A dedicated team of staff members collaborated to reimagine the Carpenter's Shelter's core values, which we now proudly refer to as the SEED Values. These values embody the mission and vision of Carpenter's Shelter. Our goal is to share these values across all aspects of the organization including staff, residents, volunteers, donors, and the community as a whole.

Education

Dedicated
to serving with respect

ONCE UPON



A TIME...



there was a family who fell on hard times. A series of life's challenges left them in a desperate state.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Board of Directors

Jim Taylor, *Chair*
Jonathan Wolcott, *Vice Chair*
Simone Putnam, *Treasurer*
Jennifer Poersch, *Secretary*
Willie Bailey
Nicole Bradley
Masharia "Shay" Holman
Lindsay Hutter
Katherine McCarron
Michelle Millben
Kisha Perkins
Tracey Pilone
Judy Geli Robinson
Ankur Shah

Staff Leadership

Shannon Steene, *Executive Director*
Jamie Ergas, *Deputy Director*
Monise W. Quidley, *Director of Development*
Lawrence Smith, *Director of Programs*





CARPENTER'S SHELTER

But a glimmer of hope emerged:
Carpenter's Shelter—a sanctuary for
those in need, offering more than just
a roof over their heads.



SETTING THE SCENE

Programs & Services

Served nearly 700 adults and 169 children through all programs in 2023. Of these, there were 408 single individuals and 86 families.

Emergency Residential Shelter

Our 64-bed temporary shelter provides families with a safe, warm place to sleep, eat, and build up savings to move into their own apartments.

Each family works with a Housing Stabilization Case Manager to identify potential barriers, set realistic housing goals, and create and implement a tailored plan to achieve permanent housing. As of March 2023, Carpenter's Shelter transitioned into an emergency shelter to exclusively serve families, nearly doubling the number of families served. After the transition, individuals are still supported through a variety of our other programs and services.

The shelter provides a community room, computer lab, classroom, private outdoor courtyard, laundry facilities, indoor and outdoor play areas for children and teens, and living quarters where families can stay together. Our shelter is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

Served 238 people (134 adults and 104 children). The average length of stay for families was 95 days. While we were sheltering individuals, the length of stay averaged 86 days.



With the support of Carpenter's Shelter's dedicated staff and volunteers, the family embarked on a journey of transformation.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

While systemic causes for homelessness predominate, we provide ample education and employment services to help people increase their income and take advantage of opportunities for better employment and permanent housing. Some of the skills courses and training we offer include job coaching, resume building, financial literacy, computer skills, and GED preparation.

Through our Lee Fifer Jr. Educational Scholarship Fund, current and former residents may apply for assistance to access a wide range of academic and job training programs. All these programs enable our clients to find permanent housing and sustain themselves financially.

The Lee Fifer Jr. Educational Scholarship Fund invested nearly \$25,000 in the futures of 9 clients.





They were provided with access to education and employment services, helping them acquire the skills needed to secure stable jobs and regain their financial footing.



RAPID RE-HOUSING

We move families and individuals as quickly as possible from homelessness to stable, independent, affordable housing. Our Housing Locator team identifies permanent housing opportunities and advocates for our clients during the leasing process. The Housing Locator team helps clients get finances in order by saving money, budgeting, gathering financial documents, setting realistic housing goals based on the client's budget, and making sure that the client can secure a lease on their own merits. We also ensure community clients (graduates) receive short-term rental subsidies (for security deposit, application fees, etc.) that decrease as their incomes increase. Housing Stabilization Case Managers continue working with residents after they transition from the shelter to help them address new challenges and encourage their ongoing housing stability.

Served 345 people (221 adults and 124 children). Carpenter's Shelter provided over \$1 million in short term rental assistance subsidies through its Rapid Re-Housing program in 2023.



Carpenter's Shelter also offered rapid re-housing assistance, helping the family find affordable, permanent housing within their means.



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA WINTER SHELTER

In collaboration with the City of Alexandria, we operate an overnight hypothermia shelter to prevent injury, illness, and death. The Winter Shelter is open daily from November 1 through April 15 from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. We offer support services to help connect clients to community assistance. The program has 50 beds and few restrictions for shelter to ensure there is a safe place for people to stay out of the inclement weather.

Served 278 people (262 adults and 16 children).

DAVID'S PLACE

Alexandria's only day shelter is open six days a week from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., providing a safe facility to meet the basic needs of individuals who are chronically homeless. Guests have access to warm showers, snacks, laundry facilities, private lockers, phone and voicemail services, Wi-Fi, a mailing address, and referrals to additional services.

Served 88 people. 25 individuals moved to emergency shelter or permanent housing in 2023.



In the coming weeks and months, they found jobs they were passionate about, enrolled their children in school, and became active members of their community once more.

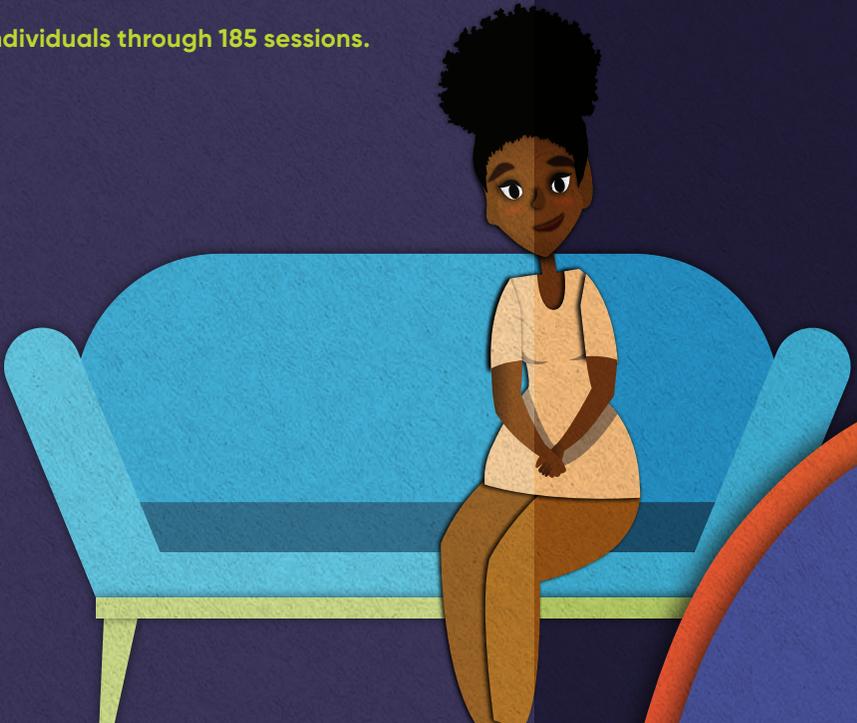


An on-site medical clinic provided them with much-needed healthcare services, ensuring that their physical well-being was cared for as they worked to rebuild their lives.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Our full-time Therapeutic Services Director offers on-site evaluation and care for adults and children who have diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health issues, substance abuse disorder, or are in acute distress. Residents have access to in-house support and connections to long-term, community-based treatment which can continue after transitioning from the shelter. Our Therapeutic Services Director also conducts training for staff on mental health and substance abuse issues.

Served 88 individuals through 185 sessions.



CARPENTER'S CLINIC

A weekly on-site medical clinic is staffed every Thursday evening by a volunteer doctor, physician assistant, and nurses who provide routine medical exams, prescription medications, and referrals for shelter residents who are mostly uninsured. Also, a psychiatrist joins the team and coordinates with our Therapeutic Services Director. By providing ongoing access to healthcare for uninsured shelter residents and uninsured community graduates experiencing homelessness, we help to stabilize diseases and improve the health conditions that can contribute to a cycle of homelessness.

Our clinic volunteers held more than 156 appointments to meet the medical needs of 81 individuals.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

We provide housing and support for individuals who have experienced homelessness for many years and have long-term barriers to achieving independent, stable housing. Carpenter's Shelter operates ten units of permanent supportive housing at The Bloom—which opened in 2020 and is located above the emergency residential shelter. We support an additional four units in scattered site locations in the community.

Served 16 people.

Mental health care and counseling services offered them the support and guidance they desperately needed to heal from the trauma of their experiences.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Volunteers

Over the past 35 years, Carpenter's Shelter has continued to evolve from a small, dedicated group of individuals to an entire community of more than 1,200 volunteers dedicated to embodying our SEED Values and mission every day.

Our volunteers generously give their time and many talents to support our families and individuals, providing a sense of safety through our programs, services, and resources.

Throughout the year, Carpenter's Shelter's Volunteers can be found:

- Preparing and serving 850 meals annually to our residents, 365 days a year
- Staffing our front desk for more than 6,500 hours
- Serving on our board of directors, committees, and special task forces
- Engaging over 100+ hours per year with our children in shelter through creative play, dog therapy, and other activities
- Hosting over 600 hours of life-skills courses and job coaching
- Providing medical and mental health care at Carpenter's Clinic
- Leading and performing a variety of special projects and Impact service days
- Decorating the shelter for all major holidays
- Providing special services like haircuts, hair styling, massages, and facials
- Assisting with Carpenter's Shelter special events
- Giving thousands of in-kind donations

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Distinguished Service Award Winners

Bob Douglas Awardee
Pat Barbarowicz

The Bob Douglas Award for Service is given annually to a volunteer at Carpenter's Shelter who fulfills critical, ongoing responsibilities with consistency, humility, and dedication. In memory of Mr. Douglas's exemplary service, this honors the unsung heroes at Carpenter's Shelter.



Star Picucci



Matt Kobylski



April Z. Ford



Fairlington Presbyterian



Nancy K. DiPaolo



A SUCCESS STORY

In the midst of the pandemic, Nia* **faced a world that seemed to crumble around her.** Her journey began with the pain of incarceration, compounded by the loss of her mother, leaving her to emerge into a reality of isolation and uncertainty. She found a flicker of hope in her children and her boyfriend, spurring her to seek a fresh start in Arizona. However, this hope was short-lived as Nia's boyfriend faced his own incarceration and was sent back to Virginia. With resilience as her compass, she made the daunting decision to return to Virginia, confronting the harsh reality of homelessness and the news of her pregnancy with twins.

Her path then led her to Carpenter's Shelter, a place she initially feared would be another chapter of hardship. She was introduced to Lawrence and Wakeena, who would become much more than just staff at the shelter—they became her guiding stars. Contrary to her fears, **the shelter was a newly built haven, offering not just a roof, but nutritious food and a genuine sense of comfort and safety through the long, sleepless nights.** This support became the cornerstone of her transformation. After a year of perseverance, navigating the challenges of finding childcare, securing employment, and creating a savings plan, Nia triumphed.



*"... in times of
despair, there are
always hands willing to
lift you up, hearts ready
to empathize, and a
community ready to
embrace."*

She moved into her own apartment with her boyfriend and four young infants and obtained custody of her two oldest boys—reuniting her family under one roof. Recently, her boyfriend received a Lee Fifer Jr. Educational scholarship that enabled him to obtain his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Furthermore, Nia secured a job as a PRN nurse and has set her sights on becoming a certified nursing assistant. At Carpenter's Shelter, she found more than just a place to rest her head; **she experienced humanity in its purest form.** The staff became the embodiment of the support and care every individual deserves, regardless of their circumstances. Nia's experience stands as a powerful testament to the profound impact of compassion, underscoring her belief that *"in times of despair, there are always hands willing to lift you up, hearts ready to empathize, and a community ready to embrace."*

**The name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.*



I LOVE THIS PART

Cook-Off Pop-Up 2022

After a long wait due to the pandemic restrictions, we were back and at the waterfront! We snagged a beautiful venue with a terrace overlooking the Potomac at 201 N. Union Street in Old Town, Alexandria, adjacent to the iconic Torpedo Factory.

We were excited to finally host the 18th annual Cook-Off Pop-Up on August 28, marking a return to a day filled with delectable food and abundant fun. A new twist was that caterers were also able to compete.

Guests indulged in an array of culinary delights, with 24 restaurants and caterers showcasing a sample of their finest dishes. The event was one for all ages. Children immersed themselves in creative endeavors, decorating chef hats and enjoying face painting in the Children's Corner, while the adults enthusiastically participated in the silent and live auctions. The day was further energized musically by the band, Jones Point.



Peter Lunt, community volunteer and Carpenter's Shelter ambassador, received the third Val Hawkins award. This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated sustained commitment to Carpenter's Shelter. Everyone waited to hear the official announcement of the culinary winners: Ruby's Jamaican Kitchen (Savory Award), Carpenter's Cafe (Sweet Award), Wagon Wheel (People's Choice Award), and What the Chef and Nando's Peri Peri (Kids' Choice Award).

Carpenter's Cook-Off Pop-Up 2022 was worth the wait and enabled our community to come together with a shared love for our mission to help those neighbors experiencing homelessness in Alexandria. We extend our deepest thanks to our sponsors, Top Chef sponsor Passport Auto, our Cook-Off Pop-Up committee, celebrity judges, restaurants and caterers, volunteers, staff, and everyone who participated in making this event a success.





Town Hall Meeting: Switch to All Families

Carpenter's Shelter hosted a pivotal Virtual Town Hall on Family Homelessness on February 4. This timely event was a response to the alarming trend of increasing family homelessness since the COVID pandemic began. The Shelter highlighted its strategic shift to address this crisis, primarily through the adaptation of its Emergency Residential Shelter to prioritize families with children. This change ensured that the most vulnerable families would have access to immediate and compassionate care.

The Shelter's dedication to combating homelessness was further strengthened by the support from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund, a crucial partnership enabling the shelter to continue its mission over the next five years. The Town Hall meeting also served as a call to action, urging the community to contribute in various ways, by donations, volunteering, or advocacy, to make homelessness in Alexandria a rare, brief, and nonrecurring experience.

Residents' Juneteenth Celebration

Carpenter's Shelter took a significant step in addressing the pressing issue of homelessness within the Black community by proudly hosting a Juneteenth event for residents, community graduates, board members, volunteers, and staff. Juneteenth, a day commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, holds great importance as it symbolizes freedom and the ongoing struggle for equality. The event held by Carpenter's Shelter not only honored this historic day, but also highlighted the critical need to address and raise awareness about the systemic challenges that continue to affect the Black community, especially in the realm of homelessness.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bezos Day 1 Fund

Carpenter's Shelter was one of the 40 organizations from 26 states and Puerto Rico that received the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund financial award. This award is given to organizations doing compassionate, needle-moving work to help families experiencing homelessness.

A TALE OF NUMBERS

2023 Financials

Support and Revenue

\$7,054,702



Individual, Corporate,
and Foundation Giving



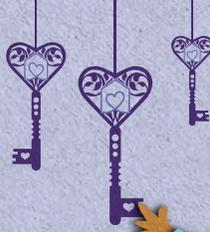
Government Funding



Net Investment Income



In-Kind Donations or
Contributed Services



Total Expenses

\$5,137,629



Program Services



Fundraising



Management and General





Thanks to the unwavering dedication of Carpenter's Shelter and its commitment to serving those in need, the family reclaimed their sense of stability and security they thought they had lost forever and built a better, brighter future for themselves.

As they look back on their journey, they do so with gratitude, knowing that they will forever carry the light of hope that was ignited within them during their darkest hour.

*Images courtesy of Carrie Keene Photography,
Tim Devine, and VSD Photography*



**Carpenter's
Shelter**

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