HOPE COMMUNITY

Oberlin Community Services
Annual Report

2020-21
Mission Statement
Oberlin Community Services is a responsive community organization that provides direct assistance, referrals, outreach services and educational support to southern Lorain County residents who seek help meeting basic needs.

Vision Statement
We envision a community in which all of its members have access to the resources they need to flourish.
Board of Directors
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Gayle Boyer, Secretary
Brittany Lovett, Treasurer
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David Snyder, Carl Whitehouse

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Client Services Coordinator Kathy Burns
Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Rosa Gadsden
Office Coordinator Shelby Sterk
Food Programs Coordinator Liv Hanson
Assistant Food Programs Coordinator Jaris Owens
Lead Gardener Sarah Tyler
Americorps VISTA Emily Murphy
Americorps summer VISTA Jenna Stolarik

JETIs
Jace Comings, Devin Randleman, Katelyn Sirocky, Mikayla and
Mariah Thompson, Sam and Jacob Donohue, Chris Palmer, Giles Harrell, Anna Dedeck

Oberlin College interns
Jocelyn Cavins, Ella Mosher, Owen Pazderak, Palmer Lessenberry, Lucca Abele

From the left: Jenna, Sarah, Kathy, Margie, Rosa, Liv, Jaris, and Shelby
Dear Members of the OCS Community,

This year, each of us has felt the effects of the pandemic—the isolation, uncertainty, and loss. We have heard about long lines at foodbanks throughout the country, jobs lost due to business lockdowns and lack of childcare, and of course a burgeoning health emergency. It threatened to be the largest economic crisis for many Americans since the Great Depression.

But we have also seen how, with the help of caring individuals and dedicated non-profits like OCS and our partners, we have as a country and a community responded with resilience.

Psychology Today defines resilience as the psychological quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before. Rather than letting difficulties, traumatic events, or failure overcome them and drain their resolve, highly resilient people find a way to change course, emotionally heal, and continue moving toward their goals.

In this extraordinary year, OCS’s own resilience—and that of the community that supports us—shone through, as OCS’s foundational cornerstones of service were mightily tested. Like many other organizations, we were forced to

Margie Longsworth Flood
Executive Director
shut our doors, but we resolved not to stop or reduce essential services. We are, after all, an emergency assistance organization, and the Covid pandemic has certainly been an emergency! As you will read in these pages, even in isolation, people came together to make a positive difference.

OCS quickly and agilely adapted to ever-changing protocols, conditions and need, restructuring even our physical space. Despite the adverse circumstances, OCS was able to help all those who sought assistance; we provided more financial relief than ever before, implemented new food delivery options, and launched a new resiliency program for youth (the JETI).

Much of OCS’s ability to address people’s needs comes as a result of strong partnerships with other organizations along with the support of many individuals in the county—relationships that have been built intentionally and solidly over time.

I am deeply grateful for the many ways the community has supported OCS’s effort to help those who needed it most during this tumultuous time.

I hope this annual report will inspire you to connect with OCS and with others as we all continue to work together to build a thriving community where everyone can flourish.

Signed

Margie

Emily Murphy
Americorps VISTA

Looking back on my term, my OCS t-shirt feels like a superhero cape: with the support of great people in a great organization, I found out that I was capable of great things, too. As the VISTA Media and Development Associate, I navigated new professional responsibilities, personal crises, and self-doubt. Throughout that, I kept going because I was part of good work, because I was surrounded by a team, and because the team at OCS understands that building resiliency is an internal process as well as an external effort. With the team at OCS, my term with AmeriCorps VISTA was an opportunity to understand what my career might be, all while helping OCS reach as many clients, donors, volunteers, and community members as possible.
This past year has been hard on all of us in ways no one could predict. We have all seen, heard, and experienced things that sometimes made moving on from one day to the next seem more difficult than ever. At OCS, we continued to show up not only because it was our job, but because it was important for us to be here for those who needed us, rely on us, and who needed some guidance and direction while dealing with many unknowns. It was striking that 30% of the people I spoke with were new to receiving any type of services. People suddenly thrust into unemployment were struggling and worried about how they were going to stay afloat.

One single mom waited months for unemployment and once she received the back pay, all went into getting caught up on her rent. Although she did not want to lose her job, it turned out to be beneficial given the fact that the kids were doing on-line learning. Her children were struggling, but once she was home to help, they started getting top grades. She also used this time to reevaluate what she was doing with her life and had decided to return to school to finish a degree she had put on hold, but an outstanding balance was holding her back from taking the next step. When I found out about this I told her OCS could assist with paying that off. She was thrilled that we could assist her and expressed how excited she was at the prospect of getting back in school and says she now has a sense of hope.

In such an uncertain time when hope seemed fleeting being able to offer this service and hearing what it meant to her had a great impact on me and it was a reminder about why I continue to show up and do this job I love.
Emergency Assistance Data

**Total Provided**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2018–19</th>
<th>2019–20</th>
<th>2020–21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total New Clients</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Casework</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Other Mortgage & Rent**

- 2018–19: 88,026
- 2019–20: 127,278
- 2020–21: $9,571

$9,571 $88,026 $127,278
Volunteer Outreach

Rosa Gadsden,
Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator

This year has been a transformation for the Volunteer and Outreach program. We increased participation from volunteers last year; from towns people, students when they weren’t attending schools, to people who never volunteered before. That combined with the changes in operations that we made, enabled OCS to keep providing our community the services that they needed to weather the situations that grew during COVID.

Our resilient volunteers, new and experienced, have made this year a success in terms of operations, donating over 1600 hours of time!

“...No one in this county should go hungry. I look forward to the time I can return to fill food bags.”

–Donor
Job Experience Training Program (the JETIs!)

The JETIs think that every staff member could take a six-month vacation and they could handle everything without us—they probably could, too! Our JETI program began in June 2020 to continue providing employment for income-insecure youth in our community and continue serving the southern Lorain County community without most of our regular volunteers. Since last June, we have almost doubled the program’s available spots, and employed over ten different youth ages 16–24 from around Oberlin and beyond. The program also provides life-skill mentoring through informal exercises and conversations. Our JETIs execute most of the tasks required to pull off our food distributions and organize our warehouse, and this summer their responsibilities expanded to include work in the People’s Garden, social media, client interaction, answering phones, and more.
Liv Hanson  
Food Programs Coordinator

I didn’t eat much local food growing up. Sourcing local, fresh, and ethical food requires energy, money, and local knowledge that my family, as we struggled to make ends meet and find community among frequent relocations, simply didn’t have. Food was a necessity, and sometimes a pleasure, but never a process.

Now, OCS programs like the People’s Garden and Farm Food Rescue have taught me to think of the food I eat as one part of an extensive system. I’ve learned that choosing and preparing it can be as restorative as it is draining, and that the way we’re able to treat our food is the way we’re able to treat ourselves. Through OCS, I am surrounded by an alternate vision of what food is and could be every day. We make this food and this knowledge accessible to people in situations like mine and my family’s when typical providers, like CSA programs, high-end grocers, and farmers’ markets, do not or cannot.

This tells me that OCS is doing unique and important work. However, it also tells me that we need to be more expansive in our efforts toward an ethical food system. Our sustainability efforts must not be limited to the affluent, but instead accessible to those who bear the brunt of unsustainable practices. By the same token, to eliminate food insecurity, we must conceive of new systems that are sustainable for the long term even as we rely on old systems in the immediate term.

OCS is doing this work, and resulting programs—like our Food Rescue initiatives—feel like concrete steps toward a future where everyone is able to have a truly nourishing relationship to food. Onward and upward!
Food is inherently relational. Developing those relationships and building that trust is key to addressing a lack of food access in our community and is an important aspect of our Pop-Up Produce (PUPs) Pantry program. PUPs are a mobile farmer’s produce stand, which “pops up” at various locations around Oberlin and Wellington where food insecurity may exist. When people come to choose fresh fruits and vegetables, we learn about one another and we get a chance to hear their stories, how the Pop-Up can better serve them. It is an ongoing process as OCS builds community connections through this program. As we continue, our goal is to “pop-up” in more neighborhoods and expand our reach.

Sarah Tyler
Garden Coordinator

This is the year of giving and receiving at the garden – giving and receiving as a community as the land we garden feeds us. Since early spring as the radishes were carefully being transplanted in the ground by the Girl Scouts, the community has donated time, energy, and thoughtfulness that makes the garden flourish. The relationships that I have been able to develop by shaping The People’s Garden into a communal space are reflected in the bounty of produce we are able to distribute to the community. This “food in community” method of gardening helps us grow closer to our goal of 2000 lbs. produced for and by the community. I see the giving in the students studying Agriculture at Oberlin College who spend hours learning about seed saving, composting, and organic bug control. I see the giving in the “Little Sprouts,” who teach me to see the garden in a youthful way again. I see the giving in community members who frequent the space around the garden and are encouraged to bring extra produce from their own gardens so we can distribute. Finally, I see the giving and receiving in the community as produce is taken and shared, recipes are exchanged, and seeds are saved.

Jaris Owens
Assistant Food Programs Coordinator
Food Statistics & People Served

People’s Garden Harvest in Pounds
- **2019–20**: 515 pounds
- **2020–21**: 867 pounds
- **68% Increase**

Gleaning in Pounds
- **2019–20**: 115 pounds
- **2020–21**: 24,108 pounds

Total Food in Pounds
- **2019–20**: 515,792 pounds
- **2020–21**: 389,818 pounds

Households served through Pop-ups
- **2019–20**: 627 households
- **2020–21**: 95 households

Households served through Pop-ups
- **2019–20**: 500 households
- **2020–21**: 1000 households

Points of Service
- **2020**:
  - Jan: 3000
  - Feb: 2500
  - Mar: 3500
  - Apr: 2000
  - May: 1500
  - Jun: 2000
- **2021**:
  - Jan: 4000
  - Feb: 3500
  - Mar: 3000
  - Apr: 2500
  - May: 2000
  - Jun: 1500
24% of food from our distributions went to seniors, compared to 19% last year.

29% of food from our distributions went to Oberlin households.
James Leo Walsh celebrated his 80th birthday by an "80 in 8" fundraiser for OCS!

Four local youth joined our pilot JETI program to assist the staff with continuing contact-free parking lot distributions.

Our innovative Farm Food Rescue began in earnest in July 2020. This successful launch brought in over 21,000 pounds of produce this year!

Realizing that many people were isolated and not able to get to OCS, we ramped up our mobile food access efforts.
After a year of concern that if any one staff got COVID, we’d all have to isolate and therefore shutdown—we all celebrated the day we were fully vaccinated!

Solar panels were installed in the roof. The thousands of dollars in savings can be shared with those seeking assistance.

A canopy installed over the sidewalk allowed OCS to adapt our building to make it possible to keep services open throughout the year.

Winter

Spring

After a year of concern that if any one staff got COVID, we’d all have to isolate and therefore shutdown—we all celebrated the day we were fully vaccinated!
**Financial Summary**

*Fiscal Year*

*July 2020—June 2021*

### Revenue

- Individual Contributions: $444,600
- Foundation Grants: $104,079
- Government Grants: $215,996
- United Way: $43,347
- Misc. Organizations: $47,225

**Total Revenue**: $886,892

### Expenses

- Food Programs: $96,825
- Resiliency/Outreach: $36,744
- Emergency Assistance: $232,705

**Total Assistance**: $366,274

- Building Modifications: $100,000
- General Operations: $396,819

**Total Expenses**: $865,990

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**Revenue**

- Individual Contributions
- Foundation Grants
- Government Grants
- United Way
- Misc. Organizations

**Expenses**

- Food Programs
- Resiliency/Outreach
- Emergency Assistance
- Building Modifications
- General Operations
Shelby Sterk, Office Coordinator

Wow, what a year it has been at OCS! So much has changed, but our dedication to serving our clients remained. The pandemic shifted many operational aspects of OCS. We invested in technology upgrades to give staff the ability to safely work from home and participate in Zoom meetings effectively. It also provided alternative ways of interacting with our clients so we could continue to offer our essential services. I am so grateful for the support of our donors through this uncertain time, which allowed us to invest in these crucial advancements.

Right: The City of Oberlin, along with Carl and Mary McDaniel, generously supported us in our endeavor to install solar panels. The City also contributed funds to our new canopy addition.

Left: Our interns for the Farm Food Rescue program were graciously supported by the 1833 Just Transition Fund. David and Sue Egloff, along with another family, have generously contributed to support our successful JETI program.
Foundations and Grants
Appleby Charitable Lead Trust
Bill Long Foundation
City Of Oberlin
Community Foundation of Lorain County
Community West Foundation
New Russia Township
The Nord Family Foundation
Nordson Corporation Foundation
The Thomas Piraino & Barbara McWilliams Family Foundation
United Way of Greater Lorain County
Whinsome Lass Fund of The Cleveland Foundation

Businesses, Churches, and Organizations
AgriNomix
AJLC (Lewis Center)
Aladdin’s Eatery
As You Wish Travel
AVI Food Systems at Oberlin College
Ben Franklin
Black River Organics
The Bonner Center
Brodcap Farms
Business Advisory Services
The Child Garden
Christ Episcopal Church
Coleman Gardens
Deichler’s Auto Service
Don Anna Farms
East Oberlin Community Church
Elyria Ward Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints
Equestrian Elite LLC
Fenik’s Sweet Corn
The Feve
First Church in Oberlin
First United Methodist Church
Frugal Bounty Farm
Gardenscapes by Joanna LLC
Grace Lutheran Church
Greater Horizons
Green City Growers Cooperative, Inc.
Green Field Farms
Hartfield Resolution Group
Hook’s Greenhouse and Farm Market
Kendal At Oberlin
Kendal at Oberlin Residents’ Association
Keystone Pointe
Legion Field Garden
Lorain County Deaconesses
Lorenzo’s Pizzaria
Martin Blueberries
Mavrich & Mavrich Insurance
McConnell Meats & Farm Market

“We would like to make a contribution to Oberlin Community Services from our federal stimulus check... It is with great appreciation of your work in our community, especially in this time of heightened need, that we make this contribution...”

–Donor
Mercy Allen Hospital
Mercy Health of Lorain
Meyer Hatchery
Mount Zion Baptist Church
Northwest Bank
Oberlin Area Cooperating Ministries
Oberlin Cable Co-op
Oberlin College
Oberlin College A&PS
Oberlin College Admissions Office
Oberlin College Athletic Department
Oberlin Foot and Ankle
Oberlin Friends Meeting
Oberlin IGA
Oberlin Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
OUR FAMILY
Panera Bread
Peace Community Church
Rainbow Farms
Rust United Methodist Church
Sacred Heart Church
Slow Train Cafe and The Local Coffee and Tea
Steve Jones - Firefly Farms
Tyler's Farm
White Oak Farm

Green Thumbs $1000+
Tom Newlin and Ann Cooper Albright
Anonymous Donors
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Susan Phillips
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Ted Nowick and Robert Taylor
James Leo and Katherine Walsh
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Kevin and Susan Weidenbaum
Carl and Barbara Whitehouse
Wendy Kozol and Steven Wojtal
Grover Zinn

Gardeners $501–1000

Martin and Susan Ackermann
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Donna and Richard Baznik
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Bruce and Sue Simonson
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Alfred and Ann MacKay
Peter Takacs and Jane Mathison
Gene and Sandra Matthews
Greggor Mattson

Pauline Handman and Paul Spierling
Shirley and Thomas Taylor
Robert and Janis Thompson
Mary Ann and William Trost

Back to School Packed Backpacks
Donna Vojir
David Walker
Maureen Peters and Andrew Wilburn
Nanette Yannuzzi-Macias

**Butterflies**
$201–500

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Anonymous Donors
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Ferdinand Protzman and Julia Binder
Jane Blodgett
Janet Bolland

David Evans
Jonathan and Tracey Field
Gerry and Elizabeth A. Findlan
Rick and Margie Longsworth Flood
David Foos
Ashley Frangos

*Holiday Food Distribution*
Dominique and Janet Michal
Gavin Tritt and Julie Min
Sharon LaRocca Miranda
Joshua Levy and Jan Miyake
Tom and Michi Morgan
Thelma Morris
Stephanie Moyer
Christina Neilson
Polly Kornblith and Michael Newman

Robert Rosell
Kristen Rudella
Eve Sandberg
Kurt and Marcia Sarringhaus
Elizabeth Schultz
Edward Schwaegerle
Eric and Cynthia Severs
Patricia and Gerald Shields
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Ann Sherif and Leonard Smith
Janet Evans Smith
Kathryn and Donald Spencer
Lawrence and Donna Steele
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Cynthia Taylor
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Carol Tufts
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Randall Wagner
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Robert Bolander
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David Bowlin
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Elizabeth Braverman
Catharine Brown
Stiliana Vladimirova
Milkova and Stephen Brown
James and Carolyn Brueggemann
Nicholas Petzak and Jennifer Bryan
George and Mary Elizabeth Bunch
Cheryl Burkhardt
Nancy Darling and Andrew Burns
Ana Cara
Mary and David Carmosino

“...The current pandemic has certainly increased the need and I am happy to support your service.”

Sprouts
$51–200

John Sabin and Kathleen Abromeit
Katie Allen
George and Marlene Andrews
Henry Annable
Anonymous Donors

…Donor
Drive up Food Distribution Volunteers

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Cynthia Comer
Jonathan Entin and Carol Conti-Entin
Rollin and Ann Conway
Roger and Fran Cooper
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Heather Elmer and Mark DeYoung
Kate Pilacky and David Ditullio
William and Jacquelyn Doane
Rachel and Christopher Donaldson
Carol Donovan
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Monique Duphil
Yumi Ijiri and Stephen FitzGerald
Jacklyn Ford
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Mindy Brueggemann and Michael Fritz
Calvin Frye
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Emily Lerner
Alexandra Letvin
Jiann and Pearl Lin
Glenn Loafmann and Kathie Linehan
“I am fortunate, very fortunate, to not be in need: especially in this pandemic, my needs are small... Use this to help...”

Donor

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Daniel Rosenblum
Amy Rothstein
Karla and John Sanderson
Mari Sato

Back to School Volunteers
“...My many thanks for all you do, especially during difficult times like our’s have been in 2020. Here’s hoping for a less stressful year coming up...”

Donor

Seeds
>$50

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Pete Herriage and
Sally Allen
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Walter Thompson
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Richard and Laurie Westcott
Beth and Glenn Wetherbee
David Whitworth
Abraham Wickelgren
Douglas Wilber
Kenneth and Joyce Wolfe
Richard Wood
Amelia Woodward
Tson-Kuang and Mu-Niau Wu
Sandra Zagarell
Jane Zuzek
Tina and Fred Zwegat
Hope this helps to provide all the worthwhile services that you undertake.

Donor

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Barbara Bruer
Denise and William Capers
Rebecca Cardozo
Banu Casson
Ted and Lorrie Chmura
Jon and Sheryl Clark
James Cochran
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Mary Beth Ebben
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John and Anne Elder
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*We do our best to ensure all are recognized in these pages. Our sincerest apologies if your name is inadvertently misplaced, misspelled, or missing. Thank you to the many individuals and organizations who contributed to OCS this past year, including those who gave their time or non-cash items.*