



2023

Annual Report



About Us 1
Letter from Leadership 2
New 10-Year Strategic Plan 3
More than a Chance: Lucky’s Story... 5
More than a Building: Slater Hall 6
More than a Mission: Moving On 7
What is Permanent Supportive Housing?..... 8
More than a Home: Kandy’s Story 9
Top Workplace Award 10
Tomie Update 11
Events 12
Partners of Hope /Awards 13
Financials 14
Gifts and Donors 15

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Our Mission

Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing a community where residents can achieve their highest level of well-being.

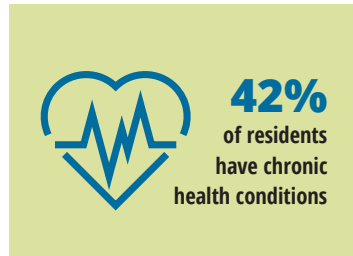
Our Values Security, Dignity, Community, Respect, Compassion, Accountability

Our Vision To be the premier provider of permanent supportive housing for homeless adults with mental illness.

Our Purpose Tender Mercies’ purpose is to provide housing and supportive services for homeless adults with histories of severe mental illness. Our Permanent Supportive Housing model addresses the root causes of homelessness, thereby preventing a return to the streets for our region’s most vulnerable.

Dear Friends of Tender Mercies,

As life slowly returned back to normal in 2022, we still found ourselves dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic. Even with the end of the declaration of the public health emergency in early 2023, many people continue to struggle with worsened mental health and well-being. Anxiety and depression remain prevalent. The opioid



epidemic rages. Communities of color and youth continue to experience significant barriers in accessing healthcare, and, compounded by the end of pandemic-era relief efforts, our local community still faces a dire shortage of affordable housing.

Against these seemingly insurmountable issues, what does Tender Mercies offer?

One thing stands out: Hope — the belief that not only can we make a tough situation more bearable in the present, but also help someone envision a better future. This is the foundational belief of Permanent Supportive Housing (*read more on page 8*). And we see that hope in the faces of the residents we serve. In these pages, you will find success stories of folks like Lucky and Kandy, who, despite a lifetime of odds stacked against them continue to surprise and inspire.

At Tender Mercies, we have the honor solving homelessness for folks who are struggling, of helping people who are feeling hopeless find hope once again. But it takes more than hope to keep this vital organization sustainable – which is why we spent a great part of 2022 updating our Ten-Year Strategic Plan (*read more on page 3*). Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing a community where residents can achieve their highest level of well-being. The residents we serve are presenting with more

complex needs and greater behavioral health challenges than ever before, and we intend to make sure our staff are equipped with the skills and resources necessary to meet these needs in ways that are individualized and resident-centered.

The impact of our work is evident in our program outcomes. You provided a home to 223 people in 2022 — individuals who, without your support, would still be searching for a path toward a brighter future. You ensured that 99% of these residents maintained their housing with us or exited to a permanent housing destination in the community. You helped 60% of residents maintain or increase their income. Because of you, these men and women were able to meet their basic needs in order to continue on their path of recovery from mental illness and homelessness.

To be clear, we could not do what we do without your support. Bluntly, **over 200 people would not have their basic needs met without you**. Their dreams, their aspirations, and their future depend on, and are made possible by your support.

On behalf of the Board, staff, and residents of Tender Mercies, thank you for the home you provide and for supporting Tender Mercies.

Sincerely,



Russell Winters,
CEO



Erika Judd,
Board President



New 10-Year Strategic Plan

Same Mission. New Statement.

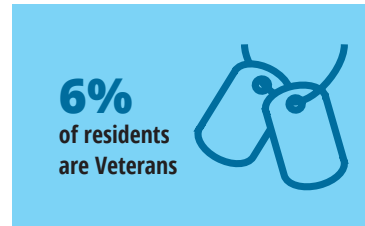
Since 1985, our mission statement has been “Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing security, dignity and community in a place they call home.”

In 2022, Tender Mercies engaged its Board of Trustees, staff, and residents in a comprehensive discussion to create a new 10-year strategic plan.

Following guidance from all stakeholders, Tender Mercies is proud to unveil its vision for transforming the lives of people in Greater Cincinnati experiencing both homelessness and mental illness.

Over the last decade, strategic fundraising, investments and partnerships have given us the ability to serve a larger share of Hamilton County’s population experiencing homelessness. Because of those strategic moves, Tender Mercies is redefining its mission while remaining true to its vision, core values, and unwavering principles.

With the evolution of new national best practices in caring for the population we serve, coupled with a growing drug epidemic, the landscape of what we do and how we provide the best service to our clients has changed. It is our responsibility to adjust to meet those needs.



What Tender Mercies does will be changing only in that it will be expanding its capacities.

How Tender Mercies accomplishes that will remain theoretical, temporarily, as we align resources and stakeholders to ensure the success of each additional or expanded program. The well-being of every resident and staff member is and always will be priority number one at Tender Mercies, and so these changes are not taken lightly.

Moving forward, the mission of Tender Mercies is stated as “Tender Mercies transforms the lives of homeless adults with mental illness by providing a community where residents can achieve their highest level of well-being.”

This new emphasis on ensuring each residents achieves their highest level of independence underscores and calls out the principle we’ve always lived by: that progress means something different to each individual; however it transforms our narrative for residents by acknowledging that independence looks different for everyone as well. Put simply: Tender Mercies is rededicating itself to the principle of “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.” Tender Mercies, with our new mission statement, is acknowledging our abilities are great; that we can do more; and therefore, we are.

Highlights of the New 10-Year Strategic Plan



Expand Tender Mercies' number of housing units to **278** by 2032

Expand Tender Mercies' capacity to **412** residents by 2032, assuming an average 25% yearly attrition rate.



As Tender Mercies expands its housing capacity, we will be rehabilitating current buildings to become better homes for the clients we serve (and become **more ADA compliant** in these older buildings).

Greater attention will be given to recruiting, developing, and retaining staff

focused on our Mission.



Current Challenges

1

Shortage of Treatment Options

Some newer residents present with complex needs, substance use, or violent behavior.

2

Shortage of Housing Options

Some residents feel stuck in permanent supportive housing due to our city's shortage of affordable housing.

Goals of 10-yr plan



Create social and physical environments that address multiple social determinants of health.



Grow the menu of housing options to facilitate the transition of residents through the continuum.



Implement comprehensive programs and services that are resident-centered and impact residents' well-being.

ULTIMATE GOAL

Move residents from

In Crisis

Vulnerable

Safe

Empowered



More than a Chance: Lucky's Story

His name is Andrew, but **everyone around here calls him "Lucky."** Lucky's life was anything but lucky for a long time. Lifelong mental illness resulted in agoraphobia and PTSD. Couple that with drug addiction and a few poor life choices and Lucky found himself homeless, in the midst of divorce, and risking his ability to have contact with his son.

Like most residents Lucky came to Tender Mercies with his fair share of struggles. There was much work to be done, but he was ready to make changes. And, slowly but surely Lucky has created momentum where there wasn't any before.



"Tender Mercies meant that I didn't have to worry about getting medication, or where my next meal was coming from," said Lucky.

Lucky reports he hasn't been to the hospital for a psychiatric emergency in years, due in large part to his commitment to his mental health. Additionally, Lucky weaned himself off the addictive street drugs he used to numb himself from the trauma he has endured in his life. One good choice led to another, and Lucky recently even purchased a car so that he can see his son more often.

In 2022, the average length of stay at Tender Mercies remained steady at 4.3 years. For some individuals, Tender Mercies will be their final home, and we are honored to be able to provide security, dignity, and community to them for as long as they remain here. What is equally rewarding, however, is when someone like Lucky, who has the capacity for greater independence, finds their inner strength and works toward writing their next chapter.

Lucky says that while one of his best memories of Tender Mercies will be the friends he has bonded with here, it's time to start moving on. In the last year he was able to purchase a car, and has begun saving for his big move.

"I'd like to find a place in Colerain to be close to my son," said Lucky, who makes every attempt to see him as he can. This year they have enjoyed going to Reds games together.

Lucky says he's grateful to Tender Mercies, and that he's even recommended us to members of his faith congregation. And after he leaves, he wants to give back by serving meals to the next generation of residents.

We are honored to be able to share Lucky's story. We will miss seeing him around the building, but with a little bit of luck it won't be the last we see of him.

More than a Building: Breaking Ground. Breaking Barriers

In 2022 Tender Mercies broke ground on a new apartment complex in Cincinnati's historic West End neighborhood. Named for Tender Mercies founder Ed Slater, Slater Hall is designed to expand Tender Mercies' ability to meet the growing needs of Greater Cincinnati.

"This is the future of Permanent Supportive Housing," said Tender Mercies CEO Russell Winters. "None of this would be possible without support and buy-in from the City of Cincinnati, our community partners, and individual donors."

This newly constructed project will add 62 units of efficiency housing to Tender Mercies' current portfolio. It will also enable us to relocate residents from two properties in need of modernization, thereby clearing the way for a full rehab of their current home.

The name of Slater Hall honors the legacy of Ed Slater, who, in 1985, joined Father Chris Hall and Randy Lafond, in founding Tender Mercies. For 38 years Ed has been a champion of the rights of people experiencing homelessness, and has been a forward-thinking leader in working to ensure security, dignity and community is given to those experiencing mental illness. Today, Slater is the Chief Advancement Officer for the Center for Respite Care. He and his partner are still proud residents of Over-The-Rhine.

Slater Hall will feature efficiency apartments that will initially accommodate current residents of Tender Mercies, thereby making space for Tender Mercies to modernize two of its currently-owned historic buildings. Amenities for residents will include individual bathrooms, commercial on-site laundry facilities, expanded kitchen facilities, and enhanced safety features. Office space will allow more staff to be on-site to meet the needs of residents, while newly created common areas will ensure residents have a sense of shared space and community.

Construction of the building is done through HGC Construction. Financing for Slater Hall has been made co-developed with Over-The-Rhine Community Housing. Financing has been made possible through Ohio Finance Agency, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, the City of Cincinnati, Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services, Cincinnati Development Fund, and Fifth Third Bank.

This building, this community-wide effort to solve homelessness in Greater Cincinnati, is slated to open in October 2023.





More than a Mission: Moving On

Tender Mercies is a welcome, stable home, providing respite from the chaos and dangers of homelessness. So it's unsurprising that many residents never want to move out.

But living at Tender Mercies is not without its challenges: residents share kitchen facilities and bathrooms*, and it's just part of the human condition that you might not always get along with your neighbors.

But when the time is right, residents seeking to move out of Tender Mercies are provided with additional resources to ensure their success.



In alignment with recommendations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, one of the goals of Permanent Supportive Housing is to **move people from homelessness into independence**. To facilitate that transition, Tender Mercies created a first-of-its-kind position designed to help residents navigate the process. The Moving On Engagement Specialist (MOES) is a hands-on role that ensures the safety of residents

We want to see residents progress through a continuum to achieve their greatest level of well being. We want residents to begin thinking about life after Tender Mercies through intentionally developing a culture of moving-on.

*In most buildings operated by Tender Mercies

exiting to independent living while enhancing Greater Cincinnati's homeless Continuum of Care by making sure residents don't return to homelessness upon exit.

There are overt, as well as intrinsic, goals for the MOES position. Preparing residents for the realities of independence means having honest discussions about mental illness treatment, sobriety, income, and personal responsibility. We are fortunate to find the majority of residents seeking independent living are able to rise to that challenge. For those who aren't ready, even having that initial conversation about moving on will help them assess what realistic choices they need to make to be ready.

In 2022, residents met with the Moving On Engagement Specialist 119 times!

Once they've decided to move on, residents are helped through the process of finding housing and may even receive monetary resources to cover nominal expenses.

The work of Tender Mercies doesn't stop there.

Follow-ups and phone calls are made regularly – even for residents who moved out years ago – to make sure they're doing well. We don't forget any resident of Tender Mercies. And we will never give up on helping them achieve their goals.



More than a Theory: What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Tender Mercies primarily provides what is called “Permanent Supportive Housing” (PSH) for adults who have experienced homelessness and who have a documented history of mental illness. **But what is it? And who benefits?**

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Permanent Supportive Housing is just that – it’s permanent housing for those who have been living on the streets, in shelter, or some other kind of temporary housing. Residents of that housing become permanent members of the community while they recover from experiencing homelessness. Housing is paired with supportive services that seek to help each individual achieve their highest level of independence.

Does PSH work?

Yes! PSH is the “gold standard” for ending homelessness. Research shows that PSH is proven to be the most successful, cost-effective intervention for keeping people housed, while improving health.

Tender Mercies is the only local provider of Permanent Supportive Housing solely focused on adults with mental illness.

Is PSH Shelter?

No. Permanent Supportive Housing differs from shelter, which is a temporary living space intended to ensure individuals experiencing homelessness can ensure their survival.

So people can just live at Tender Mercies forever?

Yes and no. Yes, folks who qualify for PSH will never be asked to leave; however, because the support they receive leads to greater stability,

most residents choose to leave within five years in order to live more independently. For some residents, Tender Mercies will be their home for the rest of their lives, and it is our honorable duty to provide them with the security, dignity and community they deserve.

Do residents pay rent?

Yes! Residents sign a lease, receive their own key, and pay rent based on a percentage of their income, which is obtained through applying for Medicaid, social security income, and other program benefits. Residents of Tender Mercies never pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

Do residents have to be sober to live in PSH?

Sobriety is neither a requirement nor a prerequisite for housing. This evidence-based “Housing First” method seeks to create a stable environment for people regardless of sobriety so they have the space to confront the issues that led them to experience homelessness in the first place.

Who benefits from PSH?

Everyone. Municipalities focus resources on proven interventions, those experiencing homelessness receive the housing and security they need to survive, and public services like hospitals, jails and the justice system experience less strain from the pain and desperation homelessness proliferates.

Residents by Gender

29%

Female

70%

Male

<1%

Gender nonconforming



More than a Home: Kandy's Story

It's a Thursday afternoon when we speak with Kandy to chat about her experience at Tender Mercies. It's mid-morning and she's just woken up, but she's excited to tell her story. **We're approaching the third anniversary of her sobriety** and she mentions it within moments of starting our conversation.

"I'm working on me, you know? Kandy asks. "I was miserable [when I was drinking]. It made it hard for me to love myself."

In addition to childhood neglect, Kandy is a victim of domestic violence and other traumas, making the security she experiences here all the more important to her. **People whose lives lack security often cannot work on the factors** which lead them to experience homelessness.

"This is my home," she says. "Tender Mercies gave me the stability to work on me. It gave me structure."

That stability allowed Kandy to kick an almost 30-year drinking habit. Her alcoholism affected all of her personal and professional relationships, and she experienced homelessness multiple times before coming to Tender Mercies.

According to Tender Mercies staff, Kandy has done a 180-degree turnaround, and the joy she is able to express is palpable - not something that would have been said upon her arrival.

But with the help and support of Tender Mercies' supportive services, Resident Support Workers, and community of residents, **Kandy has learned how to love and respect herself.** Her sobriety means that Kandy is a completely different person today than when she came here three years ago. According to Tender Mercies staff, Kandy has done a 180-degree turnaround, and the joy she is able to express is palpable - not something that would have been said upon her arrival.

That is the transformative power of Permanent Supportive Housing. When individuals are given access to the kind of stability, security, and dignity provided by Tender Mercies, they are given the opportunity to change the trajectory of their life.

Today Kandy enjoys walking and listening to the radio, and spends her days making art and working on herself.

"I made it this far," she said. "I can go further."

We cannot wait to see how far Kandy will go, and are proud to be her cheerleaders along the way.



More than a Job: Tender Mercies Named a Top Workplace in 2023

Tender Mercies has been named a Top Workplace for 2023! This marks the fifth time in six years that we have been awarded this distinction. The positivity of our team, the results we achieve for our residents, and the dedication to challenging ourselves to do better are all reasons for this award.

This award is given through Top Workplaces, in partnership with the independent data comparison group, Energage. Analyzing data from research-backed anonymized employee engagement surveys, Energage identifies people-first Top Workplaces across the country, in partnership with 60 of the nation's most reputable media outlets, including The Cincinnati Enquirer.



"I love my job because Tender Mercies is flexible, they show appreciation to staff, and are very supportive."

"This is my personal calling."

INCLUSION Placed in **95TH** PERCENTILE

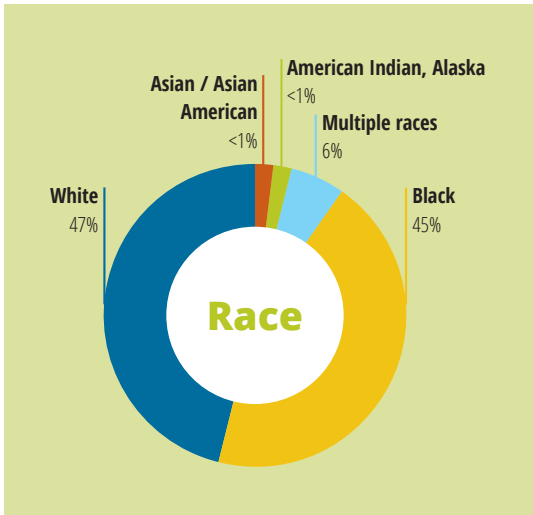
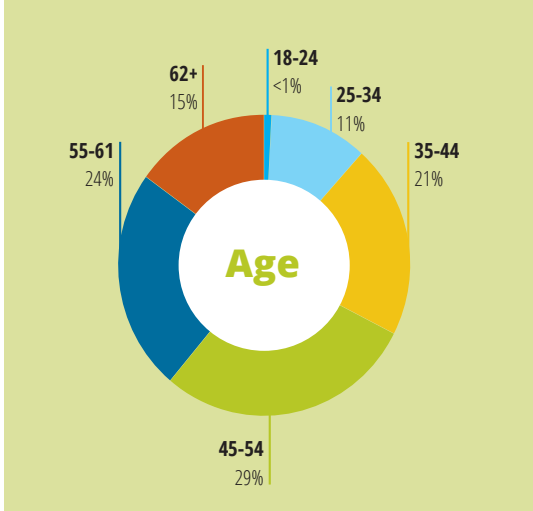
MANAGEMENT Placed in **94TH** PERCENTILE

Top Cultural Strengths
Caring • Respect • Compassion



"Different ideas are highly encouraged at Tender Mercies. There is a culture of innovation where we know that trying new things means making it up as we go. Pivoting an idea until it works is an encouraged behavior."

Resident Demographics





More than a Story: Tomie Update

In last year's Annual Report, we introduced you to Tomie, a resident who was working to live with his mental illness, and was thriving at Tender Mercies. At the end of our story, Tomie was considering ways to be a more active in the community.



Tomie's can-do attitude and personal strength have allowed him to create opportunities for himself. Tender Mercies is proud to have provided a safe, stable environment in which Tomie could thrive.

Tomie took initiative to find a job at Milkman OTR

and has been working there since their opening in September 2022. This is a huge step for Tomie, and we are incredibly proud of him. According to Managing Partner, Adam Wiggins, Tomie has expanded his initial role of washing dishes and now helps with prep work in the kitchen and has a clear desire to learn as much as he can about the business. "Everybody loves Tomie," said Wiggins. "He has an awesome disposition. We love having him on our team."

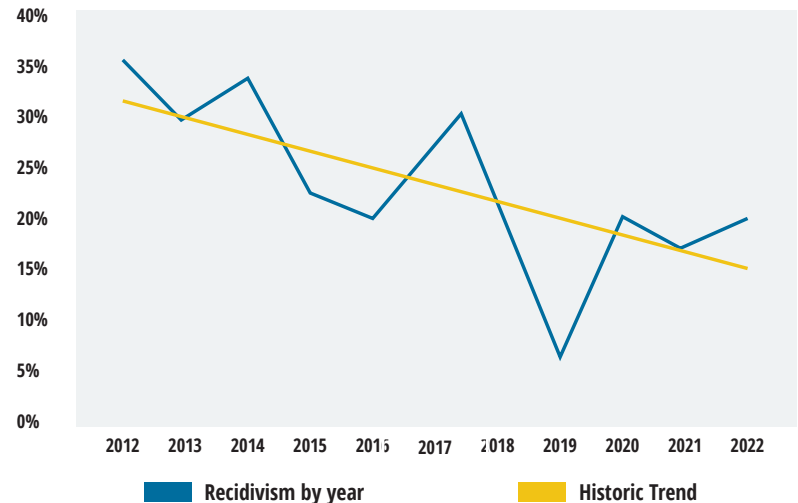
Recidivism

At Tender Mercies, recidivism, defined as a "return to homelessness within two years of exiting" homelessness services, continues to trend downward, despite a rise in recidivism in 2022. Many factors contribute to this number.

But while progress in this area is not always linear, we will always strive to create the best, most sustainable outcomes for those who leave Tender Mercies.

223 People Served

Recidivism among Tender Mercies residents



Tee Up for Tender Mercies



The 31st Annual Golf Outing took place on June 12, 2023 at Wetherington Golf & Country Club, one of the most prestigious full-service private clubs in Cincinnati. Golfers enjoyed first-class golf conditions played in a four-player scramble format.

Together, donors raised over \$95,000!



Save the Date: Tender Mercies' Third Annual Halloween Bash

Tender Mercies invites you to a magical night at our third annual Halloween Bash benefiting homeless adults with mental illness on October 27 at 6:30pm at MegaCorp Pavillion.



WCPO's Evan Millward and Hindman Auction will lead us through this enchanting night featuring entertainment from Floyd and the Walkmen.

Both live and silent auctions support Tender Mercies' mission to provide home and hope to over 200 adults with mental illness who have experienced homelessness.

This rockin' evening will be so FUN it's SCARY!

Visit TMGala2023.givesmart.com to learn more.





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 Sisters of the Precious Blood	 TQL FOUNDATION
 USB UNION SAVINGS BANK	 Western & Southern <small>Financial Group</small>

Awards



Cobblestone OTR

Neighborhood Partner

Our 12th Street neighbors at Cobblestone OTR have exuded acceptance, understanding, and support. Their open communication continues to foster a healthy relationship. Thank you for your commitment to our community!



Sheila Gray and Bob Herzog

Community Partner

Local 12 anchors, and emcees of the 2022 Tender Mercies Gala, Sheila and Bob brought awareness of Tender Mercies in a myriad ways, and helped us exceed our fundraising goal!

Volunteers of the Year

Given to a group or individual in recognition of service to the agency in furthering its mission and values and whose service has made a significant and lasting positive impact on the organization and its residents.



Guttman Family

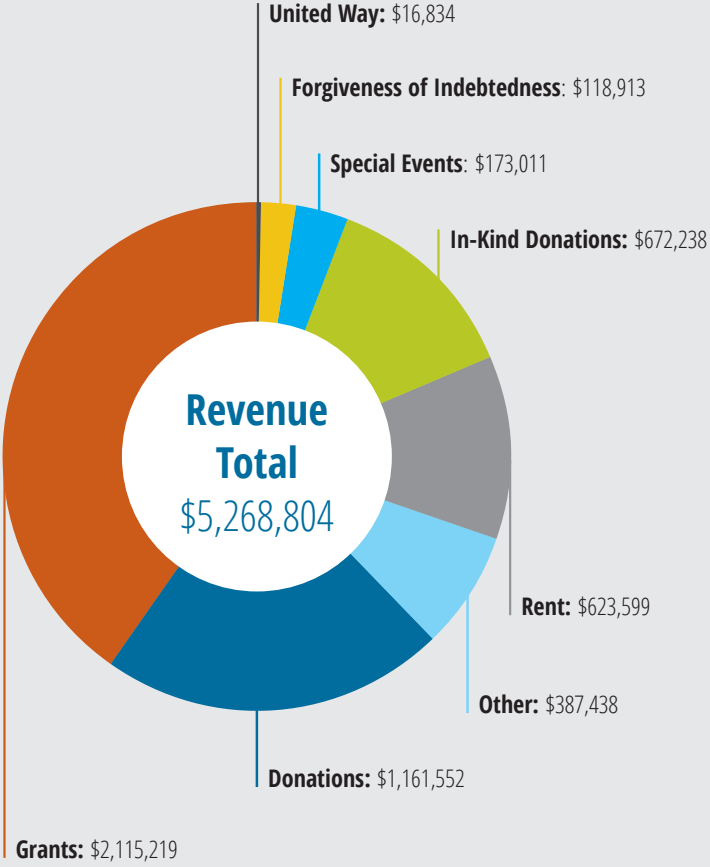
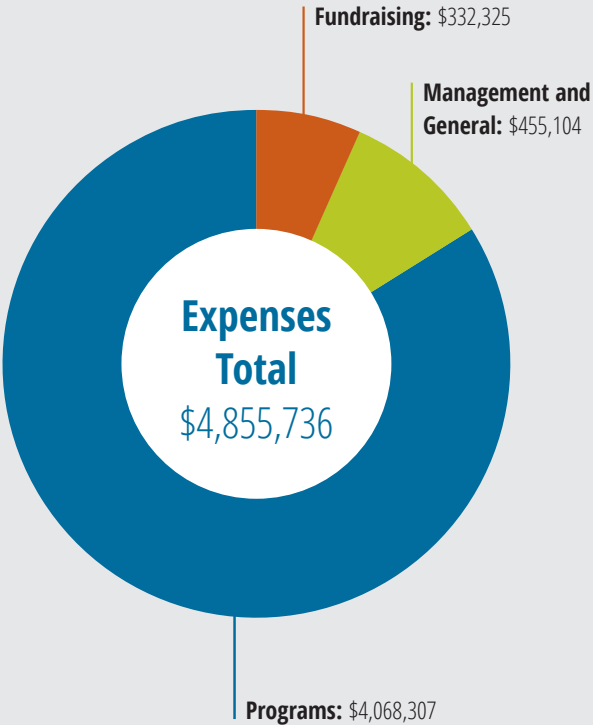


Clifton Cohort



Heritage Presbyterian Church

Financials



End of year net assets: \$20,966,480



Thank you for your support

In Honor of:

Alloy FX
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Every single donation to Tender Mercies is greatly appreciated. We apologize for any misspellings or omissions.

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