JUNE

2021



Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services

Hope Starts Here www.shelterme.org



On February 24, 2020, the board approved the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. The week of March 16, 2020, Governor Mills issued several executive orders to manage the unfolding crisis. On March 17th, MMHSS instituted the first pandemic related changes to our operations beginning with sending half our staff home with no idea how long the changes in staffing would last or whether we would be able to pay those who had to stay home because they were considered high risk for COVID-19 or lived with highly vulnerable family members.

It is not hyperbole to say we were in the midst of an existential crisis.

Since then, we have spent every day of every week responding to a disaster of unprecedented proportions. The COVID-19 pandemic defied all boundaries and conventional understanding of a public health crisis. Over 600,000 Americans lost their lives, more than all the Americans who died in all the 20th and 21st century wars and armed conflicts combined.

From a distance of 15 months, it is difficult to recall the fear and confusion of those early months of the pandemic. We had no idea how fast the virus would spread or how we would cope if someone in our community became ill. There was no playbook explaining how to respond – how to assess the risk, how to allocate scarce resources, how to rebuild our shelter from the ground up in order to meet the needs of a highly vulnerable population while keeping our staff, board, and volunteers safe? Where do you send a guest who tests positive for COVID when no hospital will admit them? How do you quarantine symptomatic people in a congregate setting when there is no excess space and no PPE to protect those who would be inclined to help? Where do you get hand sanitizer when the entire world has run out?

In this report you will hear about our response to the pandemic in the context of our strategic goals. This is not the report we envisioned when the board approved the strategic plan those many months ago. And while effective pandemic response became our number one priority, the framework of this strategic plan served as a guidepost, ensuring that we understood how the board expected us to respond even if we were unsure of the circumstances we would face daily or what resources we would have to hand. While there were many uncertainties, the will of the board was not one of them.

To say that I am inordinately proud of this organization is a vast understatement. Every single person involved with MMHSS, from staff and volunteers to the board, donors, and even the guests and tenants themselves, has shown extraordinary grit and resilience. Despite the once in a century challenges, collectively, we rose to the occasion.

Executive Summary (continued)

There is still more work to be done and we have endeavored to point out where we believe we should focus given the conditions as we understand them today. It bears remembering that we are still under the governor's pandemic executive orders and the CDC continues to recommend the full suite of virus mitigation protocols, including mask wearing and social distancing.

We are unequivocally stronger today as an organization than we were in February 2020. The reason for that strength is rooted in one aspect of our pandemic response which sums up all that we have done and all we have yet to do: despite the extensive impact of this virus on other congregate settings, in 16 months, only three MMHSS community members contracted COVID-19 and there was no subsequent transmission within our four walls.

We did what we set out to do: provided the highest caliber crisis services to the most vulnerable people in Maine and we kept every single one of us safe.

That is our single greatest achievement and the one I shall remember for the rest of my life.

Yours in partnership,

Katie Spencer White Chief Executive Officer



OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS

How will we end homelessness one person, one family, one child at a time? 2020 was the most challenging year of my 27-year career in social services. In March of 2020, we sent home most of the staff and had to figure out how to continue to function. The initial fear was the first challenge. We immediately put in place all CDC precautions, which at the time, included disinfecting, hand washing, and social distancing of 3 feet. We moved half of our guests out of the shelter and into a local hotel. Many of our staff were assessing the risk of keeping our positions and fulfilling the mission of MMHS. The vast majority stayed. We had no idea what challenges were to come up on any given day.

As the pandemic stretched on, we implemented many adaptations to our services. Many services were provided remotely, such as Case Management and Housing Navigation. Our shelter attendant team stayed at their posts. The level of dedication and sacrifice by all our teams has been inspiring. I would formally like to thank the essential workers in our organization for assuming the risk of keeping the shelter and its programs open and functioning through all of 2020 and into 2021.

I am most proud of our ability to mitigate the virus in our shelter. To date, no one has contracted Covid 19 at the shelter. We have had 2 staff and 1 guest test positive without any other spread of the virus. This is due to the diligence of everyone who entered the building, wearing masks, checking symptoms, taking temperatures, disinfecting doorknobs, administering Covid tests, isolating when deemed a contact, and getting vaccinated.

In February of 2021 we took on a FEMA project in partnership with Maine State Housing. The project required us to manage and staff 29 hotel rooms at the Best Western in Waterville. Through this project, we have been able to house families and individuals. At its peak we housed 80 people a night. We were able to partner with the City of Waterville to assist the city in mitigating their General Assistance rolls, saving the city a significant amount of funding. The need has been great in Central Maine, and this was a welcomed resource. The project also required us to staff and manage 2 locations. The effort that has gone into this project stretched us beyond our capacity. I am happy to report that we have managed the additional site with far less issues than other providers, taking on similar projects in our state. The hotel project is winding down and is scheduled to end in September.

We continue to face challenges because of the pandemic. The most pressing is the ability to find affordable stable housing for our guests. I am confident our team will face this challenge using all the skill and dedication I know they possess.

Next, we are facing an employee shortage in our area as well as in the entire country. We absolutely need to retain and continue to gain talent to accomplish the mission of the organization.

I look forward to meeting and exceeding the challenges we will face in the rest of 2021 and entering 2022. Our programs are strong and will continue to be a model for the rest of the state.

David Sovetsky Program Director

PILLAR 1:

Increase emergency shelter capacity.

Shelter

The initial impact to the shelter from the pandemic was a decrease in bed nights. This had the greatest impact on 2020. At the first of this year, we added 29 rooms at the Best Western, increasing bed nights dramatically. Bed nights impact the shelter attendant team the most, as there are more people that they need to provide services to at a given time.

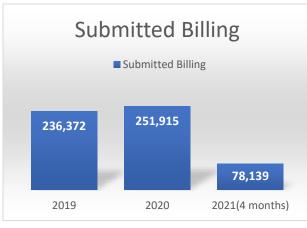


Note: 2021 will have a strong showing for the first of the year but will decrease from here on out as the hotel rooms decrease without being filled. The hotel project is scheduled to end in September. We have, however, had more bed nights in the past 6 months than in all of last year. This will be the most bed nights the shelter has provided in any year to date.

The number of guests served each year is directly related to how many guests are successfully housed. There was a dramatic decrease in available units in 2020 and continuing into 2021. This has been impacted by an eviction moratorium as well as property being bought and converted into less available units. Central Maine has been short on much needed low-income housing well before the pandemic.

Note: We have served more guests for the past 6 months in 2021 due to 29 rooms being available at the Best Western. This will decrease as the hotel project ends.





Targeted Case Management (TCM)

As exhibited in the graph to the left our TCM program was able to exceed 2019's productivity even in the midst of the pandemic. We continue to show strong numbers for 2021 despite losing half our Case Management team at the beginning of the year.

PILLAR 1:

Expand YES program.

Youth Empowerment Supports (YES)

This year has been slower paced yet positive. Due to the nature of the pandemic, our tenants that were ready to move on struggled to find housing outside the program. This is beginning to change as units become available. We put many activities on hold this year due to social distancing. Our in-person meetings and dinners were halted but we did come up with creative open house style get togethers for the holidays. We had food that staff served with tenants coming in by appointment to individually celebrate and socialize with the team. We also did zoom and discord meetings to try and stay on top of community meetings. This was a struggle because many of the tenants were uncomfortable being on camera. They cannot wait to get back to in-person meetings. We have scheduled outside activities such as cook outs as well. We look forward to putting much of our programming back into place for the remainder of 2021.

During the pandemic, our tenants continued to show progress on their goals. We had tenants looking for work and succeeding, some working with Vocational Rehab and some on their own. A couple of tenants chose to enter college and take advantage of online learning rather than have the anxiety of a classroom. We also had one tenant choose cosmetology school. We had some individuals take their permit test and are working on becoming licensed drivers.

We look forward to the YES program continuing to support our youth with preparing for life after homelessness.

Expand homelessness prevention.

Diversion and Coordinated Entry

Eight months into the Covid-19 pandemic, Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services added a new position to help work with the increased numbers of homeless inquiries and increase homeless prevention activities. The Coordinated Entry Specialist meets or speaks with individuals, couples, and families seeking shelter. At point of contact, a screening assessment is done to determine the needs of the people in search of assistance. Based

on the interview done by the "CES", a triage system outlines the next person or persons to be serviced under MMHSS. This position allows us to focus on the needlest of people to be helped and placed first into services. It also keeps bed numbers up, as one person leaves the program, the CES quickly fills that bed to the next person/persons in line to swiftly transition placement.

A Diversion Grant was recently awarded to Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Services to assist those calling for



services by diverting them from homeless services. We now have funding to help callers stay out of an emergency shelter by providing assistance such as rent payments, transportation expenses, and any other need that will help someone remain in their current housing situation.

The CES also tracks all inquiries and placements that MMHSS has each month so we can review what services are being most utilized, and what areas need more focus. MMHSS has been the first shelter to incorporate this position in the state of Maine, working in conjunction with Maine State Housing and HUD to utilize the Diversion Grant.

CAPACITY CAPACITY

How will we do what we do better for more people?

The sudden shift in all areas of operations, and in life, created a sense of urgency that our team had to respond to without many options except to "just do it."

Our work is incredibly complex and, in light of the pandemic, every aspect of what we do - from how we do it to where it is done and how frequently - was evaluated and subjected to significant assessment and, where indicated, redesign. All of this had to be accomplished while continuing to keep the doors open, guests and staff safe, and revenues high. There are few areas within operations that did not have a revision or a newly created process to execute. This on top of a significant increase in state and federal funding which caused our financial tasks to skyrocket.

Despite the significant increase in demand on the operations team, we had no additional capacity and had to accomplish this work with the same number of staff who had the same number of hours per week, and a 45% increase in transactions, processes, accounting, analysis, reconciliation and audit submissions.

There were also additional challenges to retain staff while keeping them safe. This created a workflow demand focused on implementing new labor laws, designing and implementing remote worker policies and procedures, establishing new ways to increase communication and training without the ability to be on site to do so, the roll out of health insurance, building upgrades through the Build grant, and many more opportunities to be stretched beyond what we truly had capacity to do...but we did!

Our team pulled together, innovated, strengthened each other and remained focused on the mission, and accomplished much more than we even thought we could! A successful organizational wide audit in May 2021 reflects the consistency and the attention to detail in our financial policies and procedures. While there were many unknown and new tasks to tackle, the audit is proof we have what it takes.

I am grateful to work alongside such a determined team and a supportive board. I can only image where we will go from here!

Karyn Bournival
Operations Director

PILLAR 2:

Set ambitious financial goals.

Finance



Revenue & Expenses 2021

The 2021 fiscal year is off to a good start as we look at revenue year to date through May at 49% of the annual budget, expenses at 35%. This healthy trend should continue as we enter June with an annual appeal, along with Case Management's continued elevated performance and implementation of development plans that focus in part on legacy giving.

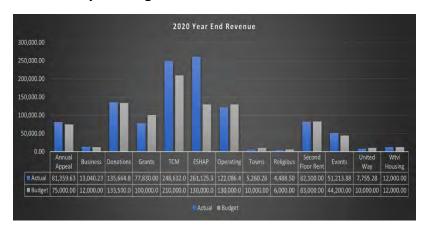
Reflecting on 2020, finances and the strategic plan focused on improving financial reporting the generation of several new reporting tools:

- Divisional budgets & reporting
 - Organization's revenue and expenses extracted by division creating a profit and loss for each area of operation. Shelter, Targeted Case Management, YES, Development and G&A.
- Quarterly reporting
 - Streamlined quarterly reports along with quarterly finance committee meetings allows a traffic light view of the organization's financial health.
- Payroll processes
 - Covid and the grants awarded through Maine State Housing to best equip us, created challenges as we attempted to respond and maneuver through the grants and shelter needs. This additional layer of volume in revenue and expenses funneling in, and increase of over \$480,000, additional processes were created to report by grant a profit and loss effectively and efficiently while separating financial activity from the overall financial picture of the organization. By creating the new processes, reporting year to year will accurately reflect our base revenue and expenses resulting in accurate forecasting and budgets going forward.

Going forward, we will have significant challenges as we consider substantial changes to how we serve people experiencing homelessness and how good financial management can position MMHSS for success. This will include setting ambitious financial goals, one of the key goals established in the strategic plan but which has been necessarily out of focus through the pandemic. An example would be the creation of a capital write-down and replacement plan for the physical plant and machinery of the shelter. This would assist staff with making proactive decisions based on identified board priorities. An example: we recently had to replace all the washers and dryers at the shelter but did not plan for that replacement. With a plan in place, replacing critical equipment would not be a variance but would instead by a budgeted expense.

PILLAR 2:

Diversify Funding.



2020 Revenue & Expense Summary

- o 2020 revenue over budget \$103,484
- o Revenue highlights
 - Special Events \$7013
 - Annual Appeal \$6359
 - o TCM \$43131
 - MSHA ESHAP/Stabilization

*Maine State Housing Revenue (ESHAP & Operating) include an estimated 4th quarter payment

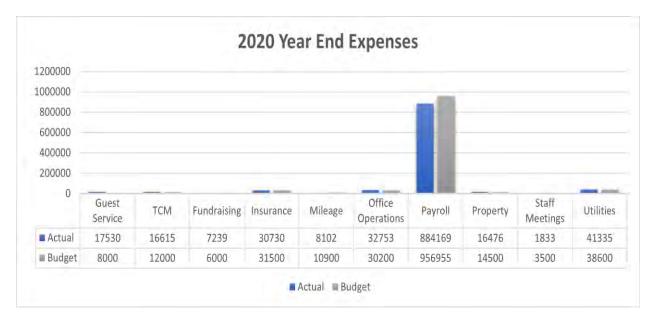
ESHAP-Stabilization:

Maine State Housing Funding based on the number of clients stabilized through navigation services Operating:

Maine State Housing Funding based on bed count

TCM:

Targeted Case Management funded by State of Maine



- The staff successfully managed over \$508,000 in additional revenue and expense management from 2nd quarter to year end. This equates to a 45% increase in processes, accounting, analysis, reconciling and audit submissions.
- PPP loan \$146,000 officially forgiven, this will be reflective in 2021 financials.
- 2019 audit was good and reflected strong processes along with strong financial records. RHR will present during the February Board meeting.

PILLAR 2:

Focus on board development.

The board of directors has made significant strides in improving its effectiveness including completing a comprehensive self-assessment and engaging a consultant to help analyze the results of the self-assessment and identify governance priorities. This resulted in the following recommendations from the consultant, Jeff Walstrom:

- Board leadership and the executive director should identify how and when to return to work on the strategic plan. It may be that a streamlined process with some shorter term (6-12 months?) objectives may make sense right now (ideally informed by stakeholder input). Consider using upcoming board meetings to advance this work and focus on issues of strategic importance while minimizing the time spent on reporting.
- Guided by the strategic plan, or planning process, continue work on identifying what the board needs
 for standing committees and where task forces or ad hoc committees may be needed. Look at some of
 the questions and comments in the fundraising and marketing sections of the board self-assessment as
 you consider the work that needs to be done there.
- At an upcoming meeting of the board, make time to talk together about the roles and responsibilities
 of board members (and how they differ from those of staff) and what you expect of each other as
 board members (I can suggest an exercise for this). This should address questions/issues raised about
 fundraising, giving, communicating, and staff supervision while, at the same time, developing guidance
 that can be used in the board member recruitment process.
- The executive committee, or board leadership, should work with the executive director to set a
 timeline for the annual evaluation and then consider what the process will be and how to ensure that
 the board is appropriately involved and informed.
- The finance committee should look at the board self-assessment results and develop its own "to do" list, including identifying where ongoing communication and education are required. While it is likely that many best practices are in place, some board members don't know about them. Keep in mind that a portion of your board members will always struggle to understand the financial reports. Consider developing reporting (to include a financial dashboard) and ongoing education to help all board members fulfill their fiscal responsibilities.
- In addition to helping to guide or prompt the work described above, the governance committee should consider starting their work with the following:
 - Board member recruitment As noted in this document, there appears to be an obvious need to adopt practices and procedures to support a strategic recruitment process. I can offer additional advice in this regard.
 - Reporting and board meeting preparation Consideration needs to be given to determining what information board members need in advance of board meetings if they are to come to the meetings appropriately informed and ready to engage in meaningful discussions (as well as how to get it to them in a timely manner).
 - Board meeting evaluation Whether it takes a written evaluation or a "how did we do today?" conversation at the end of board meetings, continual improvement depends on seeking feedback. I can offer a sample of a simple board meeting evaluation tool.
 - Bylaws review and updates It might be tempting to tackle the necessary updates to the bylaws first, but I'll suggest you work through some of the other issues before engaging in that process. However, I DO think that it makes sense to explore the possibility of implementing term limits, particularly as that impacts the board member recruitment process.

• Lastly, I'll suggest the board be provided with this document and that at a future meeting the governance committee describe its agenda and the work to be prioritized before asking, "what else should be on our 'to-do' list?"

As in all things, the necessity of the present moment has meant that some of the focus on implementing these recommendations has been diverted to other concerns. Importantly, one of Mr. Walstrom's recommendations was delaying updates to the bylaws. The board had already begun this work and the approval of the new bylaws is one of the great successes of the board and lays the groundwork for re-energizing governance.

Going forward, the board should review these recommendations and consider which ones have been advanced and which ones need renewed focus.

> Recruit and retain top talent.

Staffing

The focus on staff retention and improved training has resulted in a lower turnover rate and increased staff satisfaction. The training of staff, outside of onboarding, has been increased and standardized through Zoom meetings along with supervisors ongoing training plans. We have also implemented 2 new software programs that have dramatically improved our ability to remotely train and coach our team.

The introduction of Microsoft Teams and Bamboo HR has allowed the team to collaborate, complete trainings, obtain updated policies, request time off electronically and more. A summary of each program is listed below.





BambooHR brings a modern approach to hiring, with applicant tracking tools that improve every stage of hiring from applications to offer letters. With **BambooHR**, communication improves, bottlenecks disappear, and you hire the right people, faster than ever.

Microsoft Teams is a collaboration app that helps your team stay organized and have conversations—all in one place. ... Teams - Find channels to belong to or create your own. Inside channels you can hold on-the-spot meetings, have conversations, and share files.

In addition to new software program roll outs, we have launched health insurance and employee assistance programs.

 Health Insurance
 A key area in staff retention and talent attraction is the ability to offer health insurance as part of our benefit package. We currently have about half of our staff choosing to have MMHSS health insurance. One of our key goals is to recruit and retain top talent. We've made significant strides in retaining staff and the following comments from our recent employee survey, offer insights into how far we've come and what we have left to achieve:

"Better training on how to deal with various guests concerns and needs; we really help a lot of people with behavioral health issues, and many of us are not experienced with how handle situations that arise. Also, I feel that there could be overall better communication among the attendants. Perhaps a course on how to do proper documentation would be helpful. We could also have refresher training as a group, perhaps at our monthly attendants meeting, on basic things like, check ins, room checks, etc..."

"The Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter has done a great job thus far with providing more benefits to their employees as well as increasing the wages...I really don't have much to say other than how pleased I am of the direction that the shelter is going. We are paid fairly, training opportunities are provided, incentives, and mileage as well. The flexibility is there too which is a huge bonus. I continuously recommend those in my life that are seeking employment to apply. I say this a lot, but it's true. I have never worked in a place that allows the flexibility and the understanding that the shelter does. Nor have I worked in a place that it feels like the people genuinely care and want to provide for the community. I feel that the shelter/employees do a great job of making it a welcoming environment for new hires."

Going forward, we will need to consider:

- Increasing staff wages in order to remain competitive in a tight labor market.
- Expanding our range of benefits including short- and long-term disability, dental, and retirement benefits.
- Additional staff development and professionalization, especially in the Shelter Attendant role.



CY Y Y SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE

How will we win friends and influence people?

It goes without saying that the year 2020 was like no other for our generation. All that we have been accustomed to was quickly altered and nothing remained the same. Once the dust settled and we could see a light at the end of the tunnel, we realized that while on the surface nothing appeared the same, the core of our work never wavered and the donors that supported that work through a pandemic never left us.

Like all good and worthwhile programs, one cannot look to the future without looking backwards. While we need to remain focused on what we want to achieve in the future we cannot forget what has brought us to this point in our journey. The donors, volunteers, supporters, and employees of MMHSS are the foundation of this work. Without a strong foundation, we cannot grow as an organization. The pandemic of 2020 forced us to evaluate what we are doing, how we were doing it, how we *can* continue to do it and how we *should* continue to do it.

In the development department we had to look at our toolbox and see what we already had, what we could not use right now and what we needed to add to the toolbox. While we needed to pause on special events, we needed to find ways to replace that lost revenue. A successful mid-year appeal brought in the necessary donations to do just that. As the state loosened its reigns a bit, we were able to hold a very successful golf tournament in September and raised just over \$25,000 (one of our most successful tournaments to date). Donor relations and donor stewardship became a focus this year and I believe it paid off in a very successful annual appeal at the end of the year, which generated over \$127,000.00.

We had a successful year in grant writing and continue to build on grant funder relationships and in identifying potential sources of funding.

Adding tools to our toolbox continues to be our focus in development. How can we offer new ways for donors to give? We are currently working on adding a simple way for donors to give by QCD donation and gifts of stock. We believe that this will generate new revenue in a mighty way.

In looking to the future, we are excited. We know that we have a strong foundation in our donors and supporters and for that we are grateful. The pandemic has taken a lot from us, but what it hasn't taken is the drive or dedication needed to sustain this organization going forward.

Tanya Fossett

Development & Communications Director

PILLAR 3:

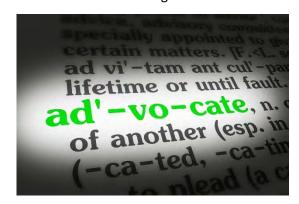
Educate and advocate.

As in all aspects of the strategic plan, our work in educating and advocating about this work and the issues that influence it has been shaped by the pandemic. Katie has had the opportunity to speak with a number of local groups including Colby College and the Rotary. Katie has also been invited to participate in Colby College's "Lives of Purpose" weekend retreat in September and will be speaking to students about homelessness and poverty.

Importantly, 2021 is a legislative year and Katie has devoted considerable time in policy advocacy, including participating in the legislative work session for LD211, the bill that would provide \$3 million in additional funding for ESHAP funded

shelters like MMHSS. Katie also participated in the National Advocacy Day with the National Alliance to End Homelessness and met with the either the policy teams for Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden, and directly with Senators Collins and King.

Going forward, as in-person meetings become regularized, we should expand our efforts in this area by meeting with more local groups and continuing efforts to raise awareness of homelessness and how it intersects with poverty, mental illness, substance use, and the affordable housing crisis.



Develop key partnerships.

The pandemic radically altered our approach to the range and nature of the partnerships we developed this year in part because of our laser focus on pandemic response. This meant that we focused much of our attention on building strong and collaborative relationships even as our focus was necessarily inward at sustaining and expanding operations and improving the quality of our services:

- Locally, we worked hard to develop strong working relationships with the Interfaith Council (IFC) and Waterville General Assistance (GA). Katie attended monthly IFC meeting where she developed excellent relationships with several local faith leaders including Rev. John Balick (St. Mark's Episcopal Church), Rev. Maureen Ausbrook (Starfish Ministry, Waterville UU Church), and many others.
- We have also made significant inroads in our work with GA. We've prioritized shelter beds to people in hotels through GA and, for the first nine months of the pandemic, we provided food deliveries to GA hotel guests. All of this provided significant savings to the City of Waterville.
- One of the most significant partnerships has been with Maine State Housing Authority and the Maine
 Continuum of Care. Katie has been hosting a weekly statewide Pandemic Response virtual meeting for all
 providers involved in homelessness response. Katie has also been a key participant in the redesign of the
 statewide shelter system, and which has resulted in the new HUB structure discussed at a recent board meeting.
 These activities have substantially elevated our profile in the state.
- We entered into an MOU with Good Will-Hinkley for additional housing units and recently supported their application to establish a transitional housing program for homeless youth.

Going forward, we should continue to strengthen these relationships and well as forge additional relationships with other key stakeholders and partners including the City of Waterville.

Develop a model volunteer experience.

As we all know and have personally experienced, the past year has dramatically changed how we live, work and complete community service. That is especially true for the individuals who volunteered at MMHSS.

Before the pandemic, MMHSS was a dynamic volunteer option for up to 25 participants a day. It was not unusual to have large groups inhouse completing projects in support of our guests. The volunteer program offered many options for volunteerism and partnered with high schools, colleges, businesses, and civic organizations to complete community service projects.

In March of 2020, all volunteers were released from MMHSS due to the pandemic. Our volunteer hours went from a monthly average of 1151 to a monthly average of 222.

During COVID, we still received numerous requests from individuals who wanted to help in some way, so we created a list of "virtual" options. This worked very well (we even held a drive-through food drive). We were pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest and the number of virtual projects completed, all to benefit our guests. Projects included: college students creating hygiene bags, an Eagle Scout project of putting together care bags, food drives, bottle drives, lemon aid stand, businesses collecting money and other items. The community was busy supporting our guests from a distance!



Currently, we have several volunteers that have come back to the shelter to assist in the kitchen and public food pantry. As we lost our kitchen coordinator (who had to relocate to provide care for a parent), one volunteer (Rachel) has worked with staff throughout the pandemic to keep the kitchen running safely and efficiently, all the while providing healthy and nutritious meals for our guests. She has recently joined our staff as Kitchen Coordinator.

Improve communication with internal and external partners and stakeholders.

We've had several successes this year in improving communications. The first is the launch of our quarterly newsletter that ensures donors, supporters and key stakeholders have at least four contacts a year that do not solicit contributions. We've also acquired Constant Contact which allows us to reach friends and supporters far more efficiently through email.



Going forward, we want to:

- work on building our email list in order to expand email outreach, and
- expand our digital presence in order to engage more friends and supporters. Research shows that the majority of Baby Boomers and Millennials spend significant time on social media and it one of the key methods to engage them in philanthropic activities.