



MID-MAINE HOMELESS SHELTER & SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT



-2022-

2021-2022 Board

Jonathan Rogers, Chair

Marc Sirois, Vice-Chair

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Rev. Susan Reisert

Douglas Cutchin

Raymond Watson

Dr. Thomas Longstaff

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Margaret Simpson

Dr. John Margolis

Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services

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Katie Spencer White

President & CEO



Brian Watson, past chair,
welcomes incoming board
chair, Jonathan Rogers

Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Friends:

Who among us possesses the courage, energy, intelligence, commitment, compassion, and strength to meet the demands placed on adults and children facing the challenge of being without housing, and a permanent, safe, and secure home? We ask the staff, guests, and leadership at the Colby Street facility of Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter to summon these qualities on a 7-day-a-week 24 hour a day basis. Over the last 2 years, the Pandemic has made each moment challenging. Relentless testing, monitoring, and almost overwhelming logistical challenges of keeping guests safe while providing a safe living space – who signs up for that job description? What a level of accomplishment we are witness to getting to serve as Board members, and volunteers at Colby Street and Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Services. It is an honor, and it is so enriching to have any part in the work performed by the staff and leadership of MMHSS.

Looking into the future, Katie Spencer-White, our CEO is creating state and nationwide connections to increase the availability of deeply affordable housing. Land and a building in Waterville that will provide emergency housing for families, and permanent supportive housing for the elderly or people facing physical and mental, or emotional challenges are under contract and awaiting fundraising for completion. The material and psychological trauma created by economic dislocation, family disruption, or health crisis seem to increase on a daily basis. MMHSS stands like a seawall in the pounding surf of modern life offering succor and shelter to those in need. It is hopeful and encouraging to see teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support rise to the challenges our guests and the consumers of our services face in an increasingly scary and polarized country. MMHSS is very grateful for the community support shown in our recently successful request for a zoning change in the City of Waterville.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the service of Board members whose terms are expiring after many, many years of service: Rev. Susan Reisert, Douglas Cutchin, and Raymond Watson. We remind you that, at your pleasure, committee work is still available should you desire continued service. Each of you has weathered some very challenging times, but you have guided the organization with sure hands, shrewd intelligence, and great compassion. We wish you the satisfaction arising from the very successful and albeit challenging accomplishments borne out in the present status of MMHSS.

We welcome new and returning members since last year, John Margolis and Daniel Belyea. We will add more new members soon. Thank you all for an amazing year of meeting challenges and creating new opportunities.

Sincerely,

Jon

Jonathan G. Rogers
Chair of the Board of Directors

Executive Summary

When I was growing up, my sister and I used to listen to musicals on our parent's hi-fi stereo. This was before VCR's became ubiquitous and we still had to check out the LPs from the local library. We listened to everything from Annie, Cabaret and the King and I, to 42nd Street, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, and West Side Story. Many of those songs became the soundtrack for our lives and, at random moments, we'd burst out in song to appropriately frame our experience.

Continued social distancing and isolation made music an important part of my life in 2021. With music in the background, my thoughts frequently turned to how we could keep people safe and help people stay housed. And that's when I revisited a 1990's musical I hadn't listened to in a long time – Rent. It's not hard to see why I started thinking about this particular Broadway musical – with the eviction moratorium ending and Emergency Rental Assistance keeping people from being evicted, paying rent was an ever-present reality in 2021.

As we look back on 2021, I keep hearing the opening lyric from my favorite song in Rent called "Seasons of Love" – Five-hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure, measure a year?

That's a good question. The on-going pandemic required us to look at problems in a new light with a bold attitude. We often had no idea how to pull off the goals we set and knew only that failure was not an option.

How do you measure what you can't predict?

Our first bold step came in January when MaineHousing reached out and asked us if we would operate a FEMA shelter. How could we say no? The initial ask was for nine months – just until September. As September approached, the nine-month commitment became a year, and finally seventeen months of operating a second site with the same band of intrepid staff with whom we started.

It was an enormous lift. But because we said yes (and we were the smallest agency in the state to do so) we were able to provide shelter to almost double the number of people we could with just our Colby Street facility.

We were not alone in this work – our hotel partners deserve as much credit, and our thanks go to many others without whom we would not have pulled off this amazing feat.

In 2021 we also began a pilot "Diversion" project with MaineHousing. Many of us have heard of the proverbial \$400 emergency that can trigger an eviction and period of homelessness. Diversion allows us to meet those \$400 emergencies. From keeping cars repaired so people could get to work and assisting with unexpected bills, to negotiating with landlords and helping pay for bus tickets so people could stay with friends and family, our new Diversion program spent \$30,000 and served over sixty households, ensuring they stayed safely housed. When you consider that 30 days in shelter costs about \$2000 and our average length of stay is 60 to 140 days (it was longer in a hotel), that's money well spent.

Five-hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure, measure a year?

None of this work gets done without our staff. If your employees are your most important resource (and they are), 2021 was a good year to work at MMHSS.

We had far less turnover than in years past, testament to the commitment we made to ensuring our staff had the resources they need to be healthy and successful. And they repaid that investment in long hours of overtime and dedication to the people we serve.

Nor did we do this on our own. Our partnerships expanded in 2021 leading to innovation and superior services. We worked with the City of Waterville to make sure there were no unsheltered people in the city over winter, with our colleagues at PrebleStreet on vaccine equity, with the City of Augusta on a plan to keep the FEMA hotel open for an additional five months, and with partners and colleagues from across the state who supported our efforts to open a low-barrier winter warming center.

Making sure we are sustainable was an ever-present concern. At the start of our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, the board set the intention of diversifying our funding. That goal was achieved in 2021. That diversification culminated in September when we were awarded a \$750,000 grant from the Day 1 Families First Foundation, and in December when the City of Waterville awarded us \$400,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding to develop innovative solutions to solving our local housing crisis.

2021 was a year like no other.

Five-hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. That's how much time we had to get the work done, save lives, and build a stable future for our agency and the people we serve.

We made a lot of progress in those minutes, and I am proud of what we achieved.

How do you measure, measure a year?

For all the grand things we did this year - the things we measured - I'm still not certain these answers describe the importance of our achievements. If my sister was with me, we'd sing a song that would capture the moment perfectly. "You'll Never Walk Alone" from Carousel comes to mind.

But I think the creators of Rent had it right: when there has been loss, trauma, and hard times, you measure a year very differently, and perhaps, more significantly:

How do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets
In midnights, in cups of coffee
In inches, in miles
In laughter, in strife

In five hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes
How do you measure a year in the life?

It's time now to sing out
Though the story never ends
Let's celebrate
Remember a year in the life of friends.

Thank you to all of our friends who contributed to making this incredible year possible.

Katie Spencer White
President/CEO

Programs

2021 was a year that presented many challenges to a greatly strained emergency homeless system and Central Maine wasn't spared the impact. We faced continued waves of Covid 19, a housing crisis, and a long Maine winter. Our skilled, dynamic team was prepared to adapt to the needs of Central Maine. We had Shelter Attendants and Case Managers change work

locations to Augusta to run a FEMA hotel project. Our high barrier emergency shelter became a low barrier shelter. Our lobby and conference room became a warming center, and our Coordinated Entry Specialist became a Diversion specialist.

"WE SAID YES"

When Maine State Housing asked if we could staff a FEMA Hotel at the Best Western in Waterville to include 30 rooms.

"WE SAID YES"

When The community and city cried out for warming center space.

"WE SAID YES"

When Maine State Housing asked if we were willing to continue the FEMA Hotel provision at the Days Inn in Augusta.

"WE SAID YES"

When Maine State Housing asked if we could manage the food contract and transport food for 2 meals a day.

"WE SAID YES"

When we were asked if we would participate in a pilot Diversion Program assisting over 60 households.

"WE SAID YES"

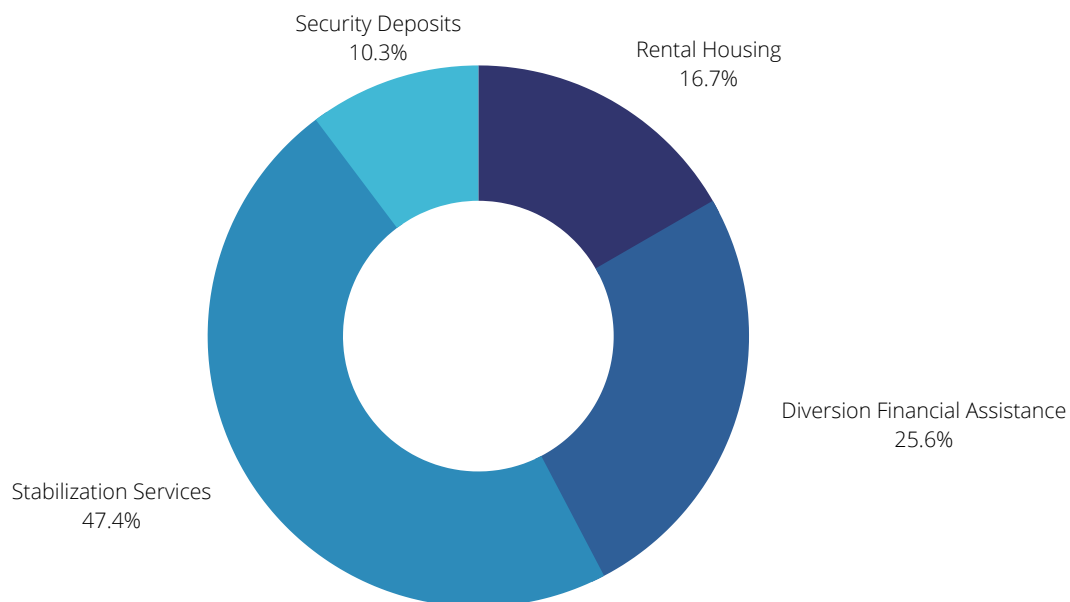
The Covid 19 Pandemic response

Another continuing challenge for our team has been the Covid 19 pandemic. We have used every method and resource available to us in 2021. This included rapid testing, pool testing, and quarantine hotel use. The quarantine hotel was located in Lewiston and required staff to transport Covid positive guests to the Ramada Inn in Lewiston. The quarantine hotel closed in May of 2022. We are currently looking at ways to isolate and quarantine on site. As of June 2022, we continue to mask in common areas of the shelter.

Diversion Pilot Program

Diversion is an effective method of homeless prevention comprised of immediate assistance with problem solving the imminent loss of stable housing. In many cases this may include guidance and or mediation with landlords, Referrals to legal resources, traditional benefits, family interventions, and Case Management. Diversion may also include a short burst of financial assistance that can keep a household housed such as one time rent payments, bill payments, assistance with household groceries, among other needs.

In 2021 the pilot program helped to keep 62 households from needing emergency housing. The program has continued into 2022 and we have recently received additional funding to greatly expand this service. Our Diversion program has rapidly become one of our primary supports to families with children.



Emergency Shelter

Our 19 Colby St shelter continued to house 20 singles through 2021 to promote social distancing and mitigation. We have increased to 30 at the beginning of 2022 and are currently returning to 40 with 8 emergency mats. 19 Colby has been low barrier since the beginning of the pandemic and remains so today. A low barrier shelter is a shelter that has very little to no requirements for entry, including sobriety, drug use, and convictions. Low barrier shelters are preferred by HUD and are considered best practice for shelter provision. We continue to improve the way we provide low barrier shelter and are currently working on a harm reduction and trauma informed supports. This past winter, due to great need in our community we opened a warming center, serviced by shelter staff while maintaining our low barrier shelter. The warming center housed 2 to 15 guests in our conference room, lobby, and office spaces on a nightly basis. The need was greater than expected and over 5 months provided a place to sleep out of the cold for 145 different individuals.



Targeted Case Management/Housing Navigation

Targeted Case Management and Housing Navigation are provided to all current shelter guests as well as many former shelter guests. Our system employs a Targeted Case Manager and a Housing Navigator to each guest at the shelter. The TCM assisting with community resources addressing mental health, physical health, benefits, employment, finances, etc. and the Housing Navigator focuses on assisting with housing benefits, landlord relationships, housing searches, and housing stability.

We will be initiating a new program this year to address the challenge of not enough available affordable housing for our guests to access. Master Leasing is a program to work with area landlords that mitigates the risk of accepting high risk tenants by assuming the lease at the beginning of a former guest's tenancy. Funding for this new program has been attained through the City of Waterville ARPA funds. I am confident our team will face this challenge using all the skill and dedication I know they possess.

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 stopped 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 in 2022.

This year 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 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 also had some individuals get their driver's licenses.



Operations

2021, the second year of a pandemic, a year that we hoped would bring relief and restore a “normal” work environment that was like “it used to be” brought an increased focus on safety and well-being for staff, guests, and tenants. Adjustments needed to best support staff and continuing focus on procedures, policies, and communication, was our priority.

During a period that sign-on bonuses, remote work options, hazard pay, and more were offered to employees due to the labor shortages, Mid Maine Homeless Shelter & Services (MMHSS) had our lowest turnover in years.

Significant financial support from donors, grants, and good stewardship allowed MMHSS to end the fiscal year well within budget. We received support from donors and businesses, some for the first time, that wanted to partner with our vision and mission.

A significant contribution from Bezos Day 1 Families Fund to invest in families experiencing homelessness will be a foundational piece of our journey into a second location. This one-time grant will allow MMHSS to prevent and end family homelessness through diversion, high-quality and compassionate non-congregate family shelter, case management, and access to permanent housing to ensure the experience of homelessness never repeats. The Operations Team has begun to create the foundation of the different layers needed to move forward strategically.



Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services was selected as a 2021 Bezos Day 1 Families Fund award recipient! We're proud to be among the 32 organizations across the country to be recognized by an independent advisory group of homelessness experts for making measurable progress on family

homelessness in central Maine. We plan to use this generous \$750,000.00 investment to provide emergency housing, access to transportation and to keep families housed, diverting them from becoming homeless. As we continue to help families navigate through the impacts of the pandemic, we're especially grateful for the Day 1 Families Fund's support, which will allow us to double down on our work to serve and provide stability for families in our community.

Forgiveness of the Payroll Protection Program loan in 2021 (a program authorized by the CARES Act to provide small businesses with the money they needed to continue paying employees during the COVID-19 pandemic), and a grant designed to provide hazard pay and other safety needs, gave MMHSS the additional layer of security and support needed to take care of our team. With ongoing challenges stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, one of our top priorities is the safety and well-being of our guests, tenants, and staff.

Our financial position remains strong; we strengthened our financial standing while broadening our outreach to donors and partners, focusing on grant opportunities and State and Federal resources. We continue our work in managing the procedures and financial reporting needs of multiple grants and programs, including policy and procedural work. We continue improving our communication and equipping the team with the resources needed as we celebrate one of the most challenging and rewarding times in our history.

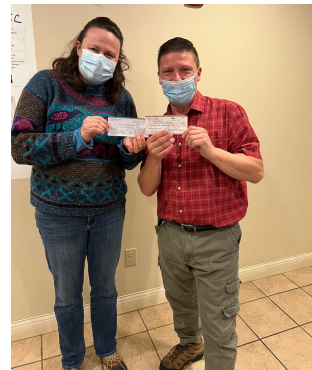
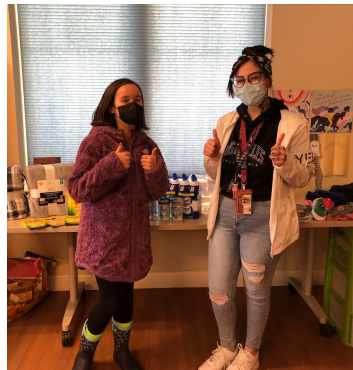
As we look towards the rest of 2022, we look at our opportunities and what more we can do in our continued effort to bring awareness and support to the need for affordable housing. Our entire team is focused, committed, and ready to take the steps needed to shelter and support those experiencing homelessness.

I am excited to be part of a team of staff and board members who have the determination and willingness to do what is needed to sustain, grow, and reach for the best for our guests, and reach those that will benefit from our programs.

Thanks to hard work and generosity of so many, we are changing lives!

Karyn

Karyn Bournival
Operations Director



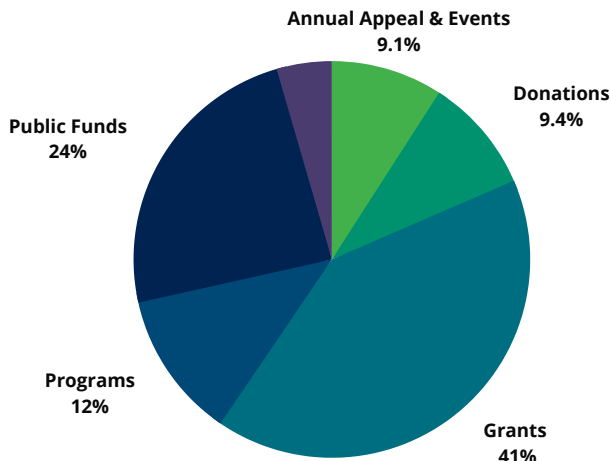
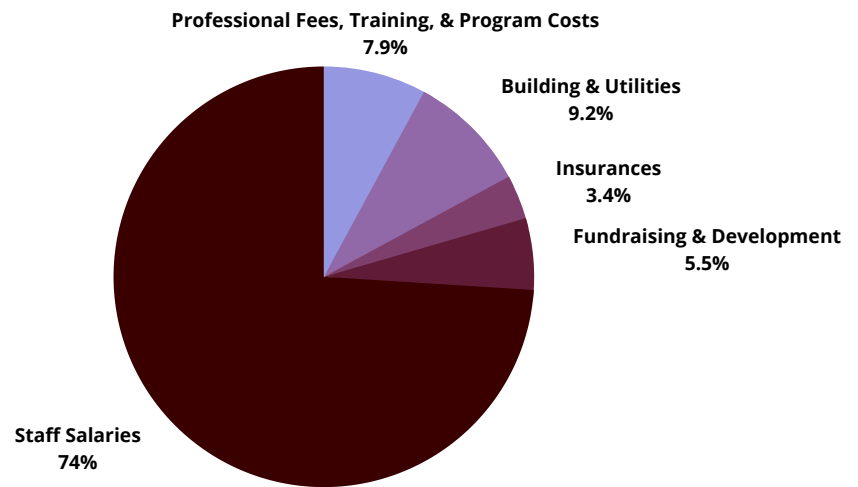
As we enter the 2nd quarter of fiscal year 2022, we are off to a solid start with revenue and expenses within budget expectations. The trend will continue as we enter June with our annual appeal and continue our work in obtaining grants and increasing partnerships.

2021 Revenue & Expense Summary

2021-year end revenue was \$804,248 over budget. Most of the revenue over budget is from a \$750,000 grant award from Bezos Day 1 Families Fund. This one-time grant allows Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services to prevent and end family homelessness through diversion, high-quality and compassionate non-congregate family shelter, case management, and access to permanent housing to ensure the experience of homelessness never repeats.

Expenses finished under projected budget by \$10,232.

Operating Expenses



Revenue Streams

Development

It goes without saying that 2021 was a challenge for all of us. As difficult of a year it was for many, our donors continued to give. The support provided by individual donors, organizations, churches, businesses, foundations & grant makers sustained us in 2021 and continues to help us grow each and every year.

As we look in the rearview mirror at 2021 we smile knowing that together we are stronger because of the shared experience that we all have endured.

Due to the lingering pandemic in 2021 we were limited in the number of in person events that we were able to have. However, we successfully were able to hold our 24th Annual Charity Golf Tournament at Natanis in September. This annual event raised \$23,174. We are grateful for the sponsors and players that make this event a huge success every year.



In 2021 we focused on increasing our communication with our donors and the community in new ways. In October we held Community Conversations - a 3 part series online with our CEO to educate the community on homelessness and to answer questions that people might have. We have increased our social media presence and our email communication, however there is more work to be done. As we look ahead to the second half of 2022 we will be redesigning and rebuilding our website.

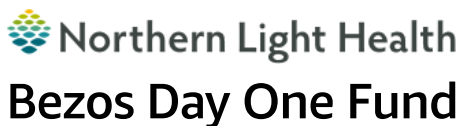


It was with great pleasure that we were given the opportunity to recognize long time volunteer, Kelly Rancourt at the REM Awards. Kelly has been a volunteer at the shelter since 2005 in various ways.



New opportunities, new ways to give & new ways to serve have been a recurring theme in 2021. We have looked for, found and implemented new opportunities for our donors and volunteers. We are optimistic as we look ahead in 2022 and the future of the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services. We have built a strong foundation with the support of our donors and we could not be more proud of what each of you have done to get us to where we are today.

2021 Foundation & Grant Providers



G W Carrick Foundation



Volunteers

In the best of times, the appreciation for our volunteers and their work that they do to better the shelter runs deep. They generously give us so much of their time with their skills and abilities. They help shelter staff by contributing to the care of our guests and community.

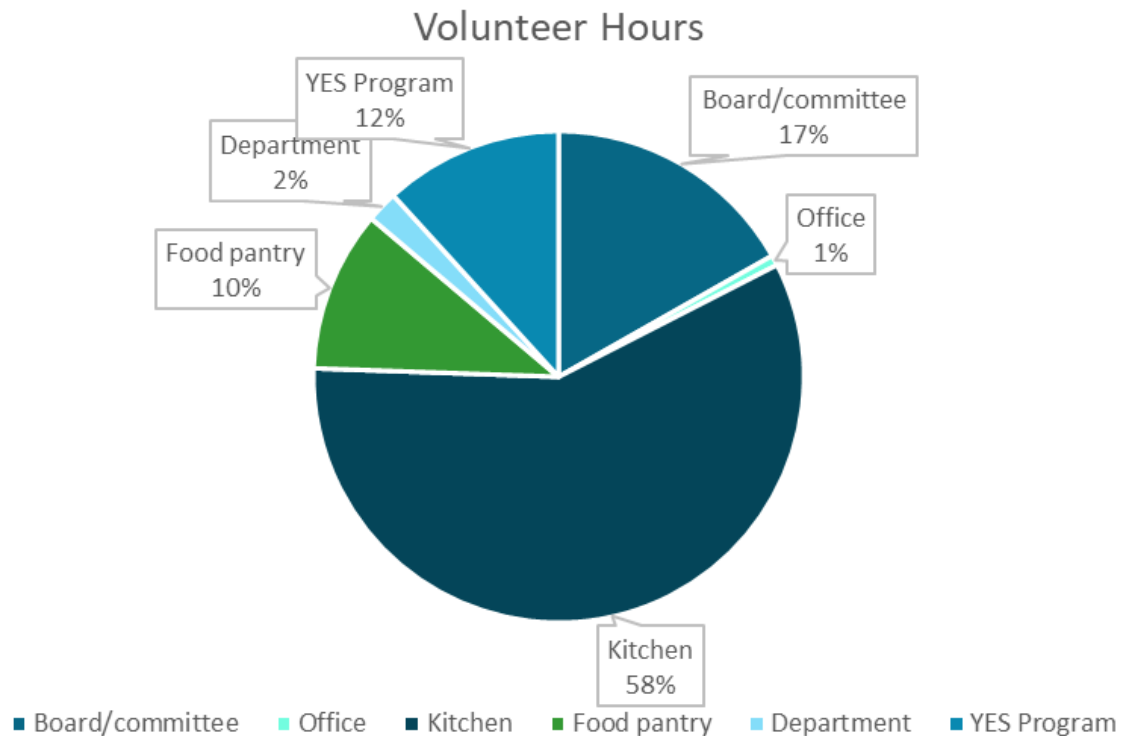
However, over the past two years during the pandemic, the

appreciation we have for our volunteers can only be described as having increased tenfold. Operating during a pandemic is hard, and without our volunteers, the burden can weigh heavy on the shoulders of our staff. Now, two years in, our staff has shown incredible adaptability and strength. And while our volunteer numbers were lower than in years' past, they held steady.

We averaged about 150 community volunteer hours per month. Many took breaks from volunteering in order to maintain their safety – completely understandable and totally condoned. There was a handful of volunteers who navigated through the pandemic with us, and we so appreciate how they rolled with the punches as we navigated the frequently changing safety and protocol policies.

This year, due to lower availability of volunteers, we made every minute of their time count, and our staff benefited greatly. We continued to limit the number of volunteers in each area to keep them, our staff, and our guests safe.

We concentrated the majority of our volunteers in the kitchen to help alleviate staff from as much meal prep and serving as possible so that they, in turn, would be able to focus solely on guests and their needs. There were many volunteers who dropped off meals already cooked.

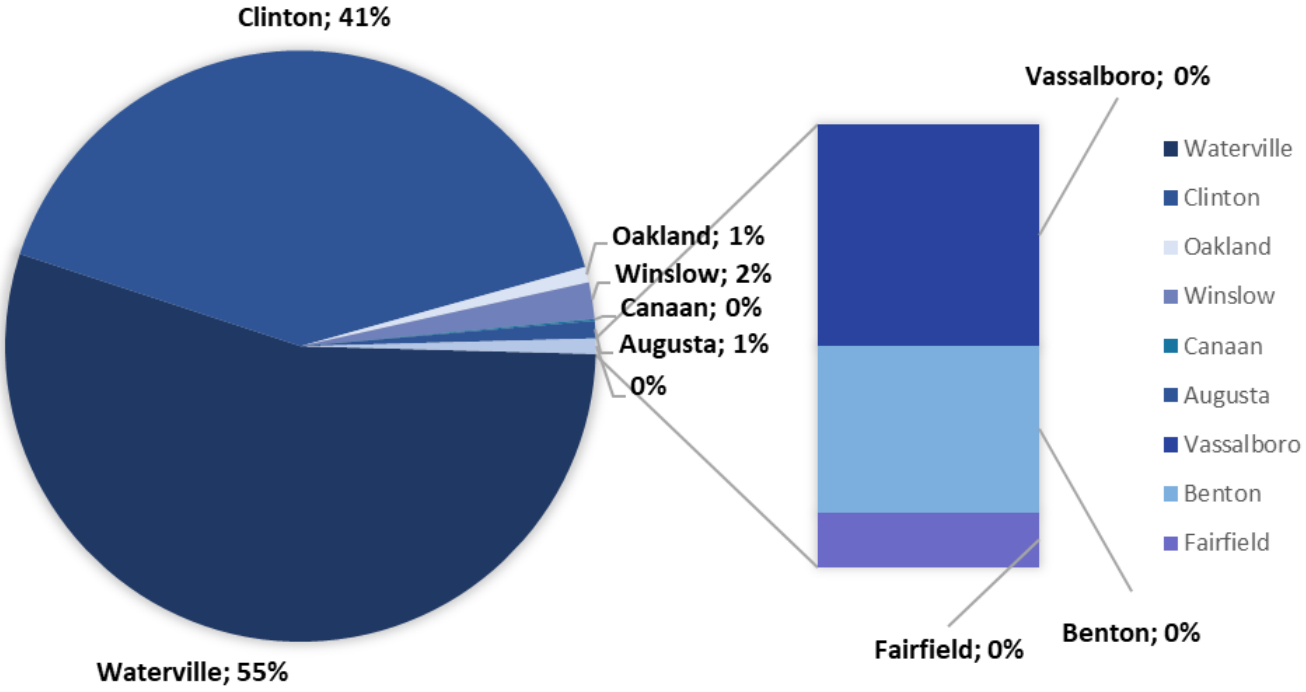


We also got creative with volunteer positions: we currently have a family maintaining one of our garden beds in the yard.

Many of our volunteers continue to be made up of Colby students. We deeply appreciate the relationship we have with the volunteer center at Colby, and it worked very well with them having similar COVID protocols. We are glad to be able to host them and will miss them during the summer.

Due to the limited amount of space in the food pantry, we had the same two consistent volunteers all year. Many of the people utilizing this service are repeat users, which is indicative of the need in our community. We served 950 people facing food insecurity, including children, adults, and the elderly, for two hours every Friday.

FOOD PANTRY UTILIZATION MAY 2021 - MAY 2022



Annual General Meeting

June 27, 2022

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Chace Forum, Waterville, ME

Our Mission: "To end homelessness one person,
one family, one child at a time."

Invocation

Welcome

Board Member Compliance document review and approval

Appointment of Officers and Executive Committee

Recognition of Outgoing board Members

Douglas Cutchin

Rev. Susan Reisert

Raymond Watson

Recognition of Outstanding Community Support & Volunteers

Best Western

Day's Inn - Augusta

Whipper's

Augusta GA

Food Pantry Volunteers - Charlie MacPherson & Andrea Watson

Kitchen Volunteer - Bev Fairchild

State of the Shelter

Yesterday, today and tomorrow