



# 2017/18 Impact Report

Transforming the lives of women and children to  
end homelessness in Chester County.



# WHAT. A. YEAR

Dear Friends,

It was another fantastic year at Home of the Sparrow! Thanks to you, last year 742 women and children in our community received housing support and critical services. 90% of the women and families in our programs remain stably housed. 387 children are not going to school worried about where they are going to sleep tonight. Hundreds of families have escaped the trauma of homelessness. You should feel so very proud of these accomplishments – you made them happen. This Impact Report is our opportunity to express our gratitude for your generosity. It is also a chance for you to learn about your impact on the lives of the families we serve.

Although it may sound shocking, more than 400 individuals are homeless on any given night in our community. In 2017 alone, 451 women and 252 children had to stay in one of Chester County's shelters. This does not include the numerous families who suffer in silence, moving from couch to couch or those who live in sub-standard housing. Never has the need for our work been greater.

Homelessness strikes when someone is at their most vulnerable. Home of the Sparrow works to stay on the front lines of homelessness prevention so that women and children never feel the fear and pain of losing their homes. Your support allows us to continue to innovate so that we can better serve the growing needs of our community. Your contributions mean that more families have time to focus on more than just stable housing and rather on what matters most: their futures. THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Michelle E. Venema  
Chief Executive Officer

Thanks to funding received from PHARE, we increased our Emergency Services by

**118%**

preventing evictions for 102 women and 165 children

After graduating from our programs

**90%**

of program participants were stably housed

In 2017/18, we supported

**742**

women and children

In 2017/18, we helped

**35%**

more women and children than in the previous year

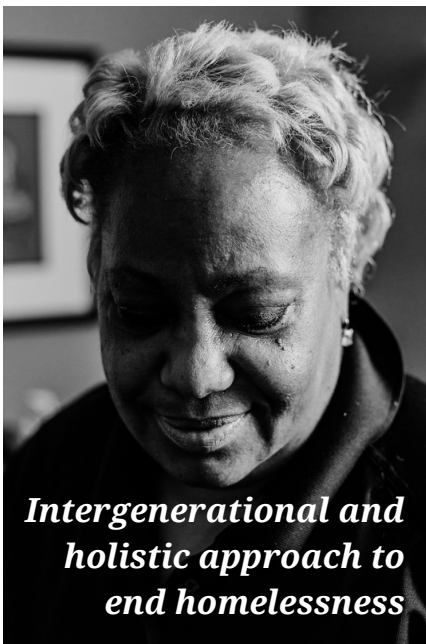


Chester County has two very different stories to tell. One is that of a region of great abundance – beautiful open spaces, prominent corporate centers, and prosperous suburban neighborhoods. The other side of that story is one of struggle, desperation and poverty. This is the narrative that Home of the Sparrow is working to change.

The average woman in Home of the Sparrow's programs is working full-time (sometimes at 2 jobs), supporting 2 children on a single income, skipping meals to make sure her children get enough to eat, and living every day with the fear of losing her home. She is your child's teacher, your mother's caregiver, your next-door neighbor. She works so very hard to keep her family stable but struggles every month to barely make ends meet.

When a family loses their home, they experience significant trauma – children are uprooted from their schools, illnesses occur more often and patterns of poverty and homelessness can perpetuate into future generations. Homelessness is so often preventable. Many women and families in crisis need only one-time interventions. Homelessness prevention efforts enable families to remain in stable housing, without enduring the psychological impact of losing their homes.

That's why our priority is prevention. Homelessness is a complex issue and every story is different. The pathways out of homelessness are often directly related to the pathways into homelessness. Housing is the first step, but what follows is so much more important. Home of the Sparrow prevents homelessness through targeted interventions, individualized to each participant and family. We help them to overcome the issues and barriers that lead to housing instability and achieve long-term financial stability.



Home of the Sparrow's programs not only help families to meet their basic needs. We use a strengths-based and intergenerational approach to help them move up the economic ladder. Our Program Coordinators work with participants to create a realistic stability plan, taking into account the whole family unit. Comprehensive, collaborative case management is critical to the success of our programs.

Children living in unstable housing face many more challenges than their peers – they change schools more frequently; they experience the constant stress of living in poverty; and their parents have fewer resources to invest in their educations. They are more likely to be poor in adulthood, and their chances of being poor increase sharply as their time living in poverty during childhood increases.

Home of the Sparrow works to address the root causes of economic insecurity so that children have more opportunities for upward social and economic mobility. We focus on the needs of the whole family – education, basic needs and health – so that both parents and children can meet their life goals and focus on their own well-being.

# Program Impact

## Program Participants in Numbers

	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>
Supportive Housing	122	139
Emergency Solutions	81	177
Graduate Program	249	267
Shared Housing	36	33
Pre-Senior Bridge	10	11
WRAP	61	214
<u>Total unduplicated</u>	<u>549</u>	<u>742</u>



## Financial Overview

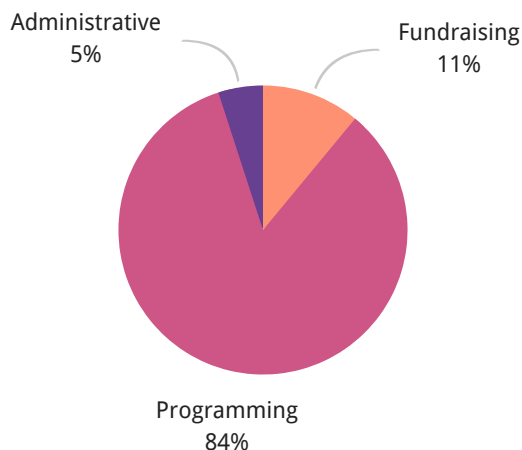
We highly value sound financial management and fiscal transparency at Home of the Sparrow. Our complete 990 for 2017/18 and our independently audited financial statements are available on [www.homeofthesparrow.org/financials-reports/](http://www.homeofthesparrow.org/financials-reports/)

**total assets**  
\$ 809,475

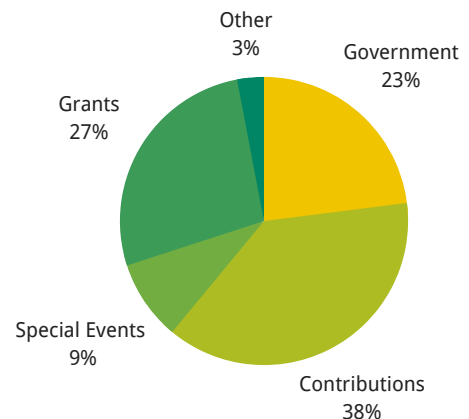
**total liabilities**  
\$ 21,669

**total unrestricted net assets**  
\$786,806

## 2017/18 Expenditures by Function



## 2017/18 Income by Type



# Creating Long-Term Housing Stability

## Increase income

- Financial literacy training
- Access to training and education
- Employment and career management



## Support system

- Meet basic needs including food, clothing and school supplies
- Legal aid
- Landlord mediation

## Case Management

- Experienced case managers support participants in developing and implementing long-term stability strategies

## Emergency solutions

- Help to prevent evictions in cases of emergency
- Help with security deposits

## Mental and physical health

- Trauma-informed mental and physical health support
- Enroll in health services
- Free counseling



## Volunteers - The Heart of Home of the Sparrow

Thank you for all you do! You make our work possible and have tremendous impact in the lives of the women and children in our programs, and the community as a whole. We value your time and expertise – but most of all your friendships. We truly couldn't do what we do without you.

Total Number of  
Volunteers

**700**

Total Value of  
Volunteer Hours

**\$196,285**

Total Volunteer  
Hours

**7,950**

Number of Back-to-  
School Backpacks  
distributed

**81**

Number of Meals  
distributed

**525**

Number of Holiday  
Gifts Distributed to  
Women and Children

**270**

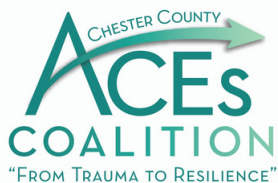
# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Homelessness

Home of the Sparrow integrates trauma-informed care into all of our programming and works to help women overcome their past trauma and to prevent their children from experiencing ACEs. We do this by giving women the tools they need to deal with trauma and stress, including access to mental health resources and intensive case management.

Early intervention and support for mothers means that we can make a significant difference in the lives of their children by preventing them from experiencing the same traumas.

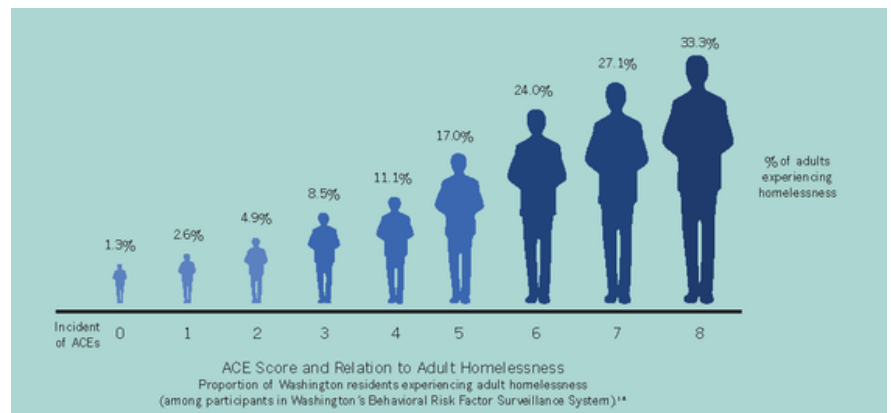
## What is an ACE?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences, including abuse, neglect and a range of household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence, or growing up with parental incarceration or a parent who suffers from addiction or mental illness. They can cause toxic stress and lead to many different negative outcomes and health effects, including homelessness.



We are also the backbone organization for the Chester County ACEs Coalition, which brings together community leaders to promote awareness of ACEs and implement best practices for trauma-informed care across sectors.

## More ACEs Increase the Risk for Homelessness



Created by Seattle University's Project on Family Homelessness

## Community Collaboration

To understand the scope of poverty and housing insecurity in our community, we have to take into account the lived reality of thousands of low-income women and mothers. Single women with lower paying wages often work two jobs to survive, while juggling child care and constant economic insecurity. This requires flexible services and effective collaboration. Chester County's community of service providers is both unique and innovative in our approach to collaborative service delivery. Rather than competing, we are all committed to the overall goal of health and happiness for our neighbors.

In addition to working alongside our partners every day, Home of the Sparrow ensures that we are able to meet the needs of women who are unable to access our services. We have satellite office hours at Kennett Area Community Services (KACS), ORION Communities in Phoenixville, the Parkesburg Point Youth Center and the Octorara YMCA.

## Women's Reentry and Assessment Program (WRAP)

**Housing support and intensive case management for justice-involved women.**

## Innovation to Fill Critical Gaps

Home of the Sparrow partners with the Chester County Adult Probation, Parole and Pretrial Offices to provide housing solutions and comprehensive case management to justice-involved women through WRAP. This is the only program of its kind in Pennsylvania and we are a proud recipient of the 2018 County Criminal Justice System Partners Award from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

WRAP provides the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a smooth transition from incarceration and reduce the risk of recidivism. We utilize a trauma-informed, holistic approach to the challenges women face as they transition from incarceration to their communities. By providing resources and support for services such as housing, substance abuse treatment, healthcare, employment and child welfare, the WRAP program reduces recidivism based on new charges by 58% and recidivism based on technical violations by 72%.

### Jazmyn, Supportive Housing

*"It is truly unfathomable how much I appreciate being involved with an organization like Home of the Sparrow. No woman should feel alone and as if she has no way to make ends meet. You never know what you are capable of or what the future may be like, until someone believes in you. I know that my journey is far from over but I hope my experience inspires and helps another woman recognize her worth, and take control of her life."*



## Long-Term Stability

Long-term housing stability is entirely dependent on having the personal skills and resources to obtain and maintain financial stability. For a family surviving day-to-day, one small emergency – an illness or a car breakdown – can send them into crisis. We focus on building financial security by helping women understand how to navigate the systems that may inhibit their success.

In our programs, participants acquire financial skills and they receive support to improve their employment and education. In addition to affordable housing solutions and case management, we connect them to community resources and other available services.



# Thank you to our supporters, donors and volunteers!

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 Paoli Presbyterian Church  
 Paoli United Methodist Church  
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### ***Donations received in honor of the following individuals and/or events:***

Scott & Julie Bennett, Barby Buckman, Susan Calvetti & Richard Thorne's wedding, Tim Connelly & Marguerite deWet, Aunt Connie Dekowski's birthday, Alex Del Viscio, Thomas & Leslie Elicker, Shannon & Nigel Garrett's anniversary, Kathy's Family Fun Day, Ed & Dianne Kronenberg, Pat McLennan & Tom Wozniak, Lisa Schiel, Emily Scott and Nicholas Vaganos

### ***Donations received in memory of the following individuals:***

Mari Louise Hagerty, Richard Harris, Elsie Hart, Michael Kocher, Stephen Koskoski, Ed Kraynak, Sandy Rouse, Ed Schreiber, Debra Ann Stefanowicz, and Celia Willey

Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the donor and volunteer lists printed in this report. We regret any errors or omissions.



# *Ways to Support Home of the Sparrow*

## *Make a Donation*

### Donate Online

[www.homeofthesparrow.org/donate](http://www.homeofthesparrow.org/donate)

### Donate by Mail

(make checks payable to Home of the Sparrow)

Home of the Sparrow

969 E Swedesford Rd, Exton, PA 19341

### Other Ways to Donate:

Corporate Gifts

Matching Gifts

Donor Advised Funds

Planned Giving

Memorial Gifts

Contact Carolyn McKenna-Sloat at  
[cmckenna@homeofthesparrow.org](mailto:cmckenna@homeofthesparrow.org)

610-647-4940

## *Volunteer*

### Individual and Corporate Volunteering Opportunities:

Event Support

Skills Based Volunteering

Administration

Home Maintenance

Baking

Host a Drive

Host a Fundraiser

Contact Ashley Smith at  
[asmith@homeofthesparrow.org](mailto:asmith@homeofthesparrow.org)  
610-647-4940

Visit [www.homeofthesparrow.org/volunteer](http://www.homeofthesparrow.org/volunteer)  
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