



THE CATHEDRAL CENTER

# MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

2023 CATHEDRAL CENTER  
ANNUAL REPORT

Since 2002: Providing a safe environment for women and families, while working to end homelessness – one life at a time.  
845 N. Van Buren St., Milwaukee, WI 53202 | 414-831-0394 | [www.cathedral-center.org](http://www.cathedral-center.org)

**From The Executive Director:**

**Visible Lives, Invisible Struggles**

Each year cities around the country use one night of the year to get a “point in time” count of the number of homeless individuals in their communities. These snapshots of one day in homeless services are used to respond to basic needs in communities and are shared with federal agencies that combine nationwide data on homelessness. This data supports allocations of federal dollars to communities and helps to create strategies to address homelessness. In Milwaukee, our 2024 Point in Time survey of people experiencing homelessness took place on January 25th.



While January, 2024 data is still under review for final reporting, the 2023 data reveals that 463,590 single adults were recorded as literally homeless nation-wide. Of this number, 30% were women. An additional 186,084 individuals in families or 57,563 family households were also counted.

Locally, Milwaukee homeless data tends to be close to the same percentages, skewing a bit higher for women. Specifically, of the 1,056 individuals counted as homeless in Milwaukee, 37% were female, and 85 families were found to be literally homeless in January, 2023.

I am going to venture a guess that the number of women and families experiencing homelessness is actually higher. Women and families with children are often referred to as the ‘invisible homeless.’ It is not because they are not experiencing homelessness. Rather, they are invisible because it is safer that way.

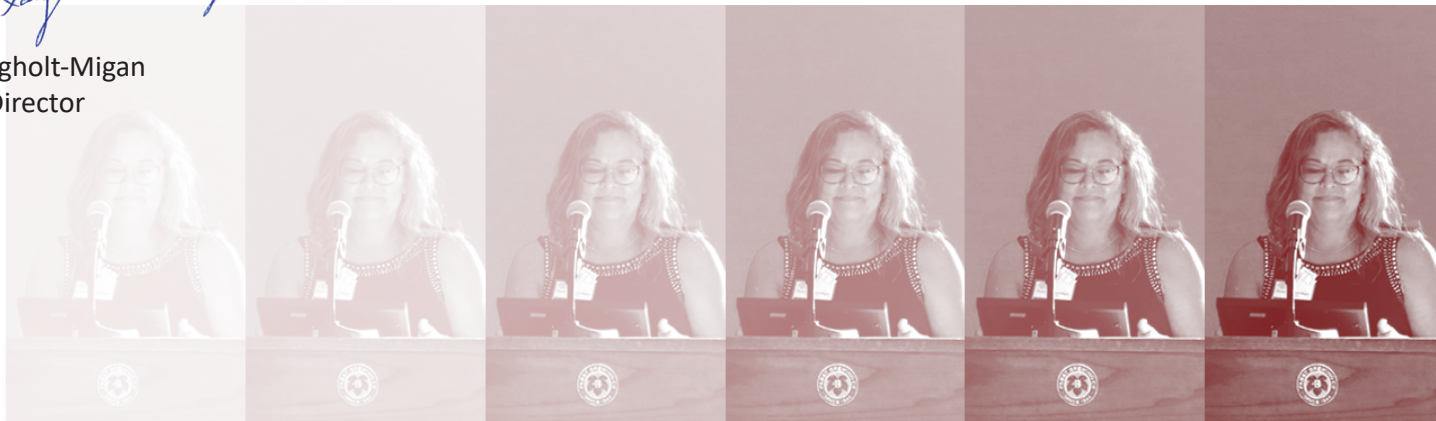
You can see them.... But you might not see their homelessness. Being homeless as a parent and a woman is terrifying. Parents are fearful for both their own safety and that of their children. They fear that their children will be taken from them. Women participate in survival sex, are targeted by traffickers, and are vulnerable to a myriad of abuse. It’s better not to be seen; not be counted.

The women and families with children we serve need more than our community can currently provide. But that does not mean we are not trying. I am immensely proud of the continuum of services we have built within The Cathedral Center. We began as a short-term emergency shelter 22 years ago. Now we provide services that help women and families to avoid literal homelessness, provide access to our emergency shelter beds, have the incredibly successful and much-needed Flexible Emergency Housing program with Friendship House, and offer support through services such as child and family, employment, case management, and clinical case management services.

There is much more to do, as is evidenced by the 216 women and 70 families with 189 children we served in emergency shelter and our Flexible Housing programs in 2023. This is in addition to the 34 women and 111 families who were aided to stabilize their housing and avoid literal homelessness via our community case management services.

Thanks to all of you for being part of this solution and being able to **SEE** the needs of those we serve.

Donna Rongholt-Migan  
Executive Director



**A Letter from the Board President:**

I am so grateful for your belief in our mission and the ways in which you support our compassionate approach to solving homelessness, one of our nation’s most pressing issues. In many of our communities, it is often hidden from view; people may be staying on friends’ couches, sleeping in their cars, or doubling up with family members. It’s a silent epidemic in some parts of the country but a glaring problem in many of our major cities.



Recent news has highlighted the struggle of hundreds of thousands of adults who cannot secure affordable housing. Cities grappling with streets filled with people sleeping without shelter understandably worry about safety, negative economic impact, and sanitation. However, criminalizing or fining those who have nowhere to go is cruel and inhumane and only exacerbates the issue. What is needed is access to affordable housing, prevention programs, and shelters with comprehensive case management services to help individuals stabilize their lives.

At The Cathedral Center, we provide a safe place for women and families to secure needed resources and receive soft job skills training, case management, employment services, and so much more. Our goal is to place our guests in permanent housing with enough income to maintain stability. I am particularly encouraged by our successful prevention program, which keeps people from becoming homeless in the first place, halting the downward spiral that often comes from eviction. With your generous support, we’ve kept hundreds of people, many of them children, from needing shelter over the past two years!

However, we’re not stopping there. We believe that understanding the root causes of homelessness and tackling those issues at their source is the key to real change. By advocating for more affordable housing, job training, and improved transportation options, as well as addressing the effects of systemic poverty, we can all play a role in making a difference. Your support has been vital to the people we serve, and together, we can continue to advance our mission by promoting a comprehensive, humane approach through public and private efforts. Thank you for being a part of our journey!

Liz Sellars  
Board of Directors, President

**2023-24 Board of Directors Officers:**

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**A Partnership of:**






- Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
- Friendship House



**Where The Cathedral Center began....**

The Cathedral Center’s mission is to provide a safe environment for women and families while working to end homelessness, one life at a time. Located in downtown Milwaukee, The Cathedral Center operates across three nearby locations, offering a safe haven for vulnerable individuals to heal and progress. It originated from a collaborative effort in the mid-1990s to address the lack of emergency shelter beds for women and families with children, starting as an overflow shelter in local churches before incorporating as a nonprofit in 2002. The center has expanded its services, including comprehensive case management, employment programs, and support for children and youth. Our Flexible Housing model, developed in partnership with Friendship House, provides emergency housing for longer durations and tailors support to individuals’ needs, aiming to facilitate independent living. Currently, The Cathedral Center accommodates up to 16 families and 32 women each night across its locations, actively assisting over 25 women and 40-50 families in their Housing & Community Services program.

**2023 Emergency Shelter Recap:**

	<b>18,089</b> nights of shelter
	<b>208</b> women served
	<b>60</b> families comprised of <b>78</b> adults & <b>160</b> children served
	<b>88%</b> occupancy rate
	Avg. length of stay: <b>37</b> days for women and <b>44</b> days for families

**One life at a time...**

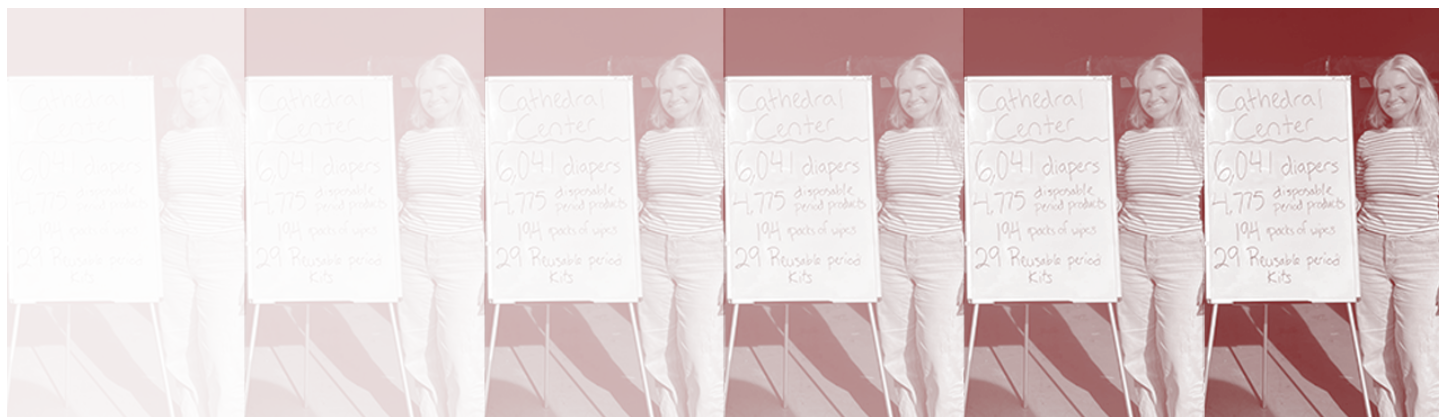
*While out grocery shopping, a CCI employee was recognized by a former guest who utilized services at the Emergency Shelter. She was so excited that she ran into the employee because she got to let us know how well she was doing after her stay. The former guest said she has a steady job and an apartment of her own. She exclaimed that everyone at our Emergency Shelter was so nice and that she was thankful for the kind interactions. We are so happy to hear and share the success of the women and families that we can serve. We would not have been able to do it without all your generosity!*

*\*Names and images have been changed to ensure the confidentiality of guests.*




**Programs and Services:**

Our **Emergency Shelter** provides critical and immediate access to a safe place to sleep for women and families facing homelessness. We provide a dignified connection to life-saving services our guests need to stabilize and secure a safe place to live after leaving shelter. Key pieces of this service are:





- To serve as a gateway to numerous community resources.
- Guests are referred by Coordinated Entry (Impact 211), outreach teams, or law enforcement.
- Accommodates guests for up to 90 days.
- Collaborates with Case Managers to establish and pursue goals.
- Engagement in supportive programs facilitates their journey towards safe and secure housing.
- Despite exhaustion, trauma, and crisis women and families with children exhibit remarkable resilience and determination.



**2023 Case Management Recap:**

-  **100%** of those who remained in shelter for 7 days or longer engaged in case management services
-  **94** women, or 68%, exited shelter to safe placement
-  **162** individuals within **39** families, or 76%, exited shelter to safe placement

**2023 Friendship House Recap:**

-  **2,770** nights of emergency housing
-  **8** women served
-  **10** families comprised of **12** adults & **29** children served
-  **100%** of exits left to safe placement, both independent & permanent supported housing

**Case Management Services:**

The Cathedral Center’s experienced Case Managers work closely with guests, employing a proven model for successful individual outcomes. Case Management services include:

- Conducting comprehensive assessments to form strategic personal goals.
- Developing an Individualized Plan for Independence (IPI) focused on increasing income, securing safe housing, and enhancing health and well-being.
- Identifying strengths and addressing barriers to goal achievement.
- Collaborating with community resources for housing, healthcare, income, and other necessities.

**Friendship House:**

When 90 days in an emergency shelter are not enough, women and families with children are referred to our Flexible Emergency Housing Program at Friendship House. Highlights of Friendship House are:

- Clients have additional time to heal and transition back to safe housing.
- Accepts referrals from all Milwaukee area shelters.
- Provides varying lengths of support tailored to individual needs, ranging from 30 days to several months.
- Offers regular support from a clinical case manager.
- Facilitates weekly trauma groups.
- Provides access to the Employment Services Program and other partner services on-site for guests.

*One life at a time...*

*When Mary came to us in July 2023, she was in the process of working through suicidal ideations and mental health diagnoses. When she arrived, you could see her hesitancy in how she interacted with the staff, how she interacted with the other guests, and the extent to which she lacked trust in herself.*

*During her time at Friendship House, she worked extensively with our staff to create and follow a safety plan. She also became comfortable within the Friendship House space, more comfortable with herself, and she began to build positive relationships with other guests. Mary secured an apartment and then spent a month gaining household items that she needed while practicing staying safely in her new space. She is now working a job she enjoys, has found hobbies she loves, and is ready to live independently. Additionally, she is better equipped to live a life that she enjoys, with a support network that she trusts, and we are very excited about her future.\**



**Housing & Community Services:**


The Cathedral Center’s Housing & Community Services program helps women and families with children avoid literal homelessness through dedicated case management services and growing landlord partnerships. We offer:

- Access to Community Case Managers & Housing Specialist resources.
- Comprehensive assessments that inform an Individualized Plan for Independence (IPI).
- Assistance in overcoming barriers to increase earned income, secure new or stabilize existing safe housing, and improve health and well-being.
- Referral to our Employment Services Program providing women and parents with support to set strategic goals and increase earned income.

**One life at a time....**

*Keyanna entered our services as a single woman who was ‘couch surfing’ between family and friends. Sometimes she would even spend the night at work because she had nowhere else to go to ensure safety while she slept. While she was willing and able to pay for her occasional stay with friends, Keyanna eventually faced conflict with individuals she was staying with, who took advantage of her by asking for money and then asking her to leave. The stress brought on by this housing instability combined with existing mental health struggles, eventually resulted in a five-day stay at a local hospital. Despite all those things, Keyanna kept her job, saved money, and gained an additional source of income. With her Community Case Manager’s support and compassionate care, Keyanna was successfully housed - less than 14 days after initial contact with our Community Case Manager.\**

**2023 Community Case Management Recap:**



**34** women served

**111** families comprised of **111** adults & **271** children served

**100%** of women & families stabilized their current housing or safely moved to stable housing

**Employment Services Program:**

We know that inter-generational poverty is a longstanding life condition, forcing individuals to be reactionary to their crisis rather than proactive and strategic. Delayed gratification is often a luxury our clients cannot afford. The Employment Services Program provides:

- Assessments of clients to identify strengths and barriers to increasing income.
- Support to women and parents to set strategic goals and increase earned income.
- Education focused on creating a resume, building soft skills, work readiness, seeking employment, and interview preparation.
- Access to technology that assists with job research and required document creation.
- Opportunities for individual meetings, peer groups, and groups with community and employer partners.

CCI’s Employment Services Program has a growing list of **over 30 employer partners** and an employment retention service for clients who choose to receive additional support once employment is secured. Thank you to our employer partners!



**Child & Family Services:**

The Cathedral Center’s Child & Youth Program focuses on supporting young people who utilize our Emergency Shelter services. Parents participate in Case Management meetings, group presentations, employment services, and more knowing their children are safely occupied and supported. The Child & Youth Program:

- Develops and facilitates programming in our dedicated child-friendly space.
- Supports play and age-appropriate psychoeducational activities during non-school hours.
- Provides financial or service support for safe community childcare services.
- Encourages parent participation which maintains a strong family bond.
- Removes barriers parents face with participating in on-site supportive services.



**Volunteer Services:**

The Cathedral Center’s Volunteer Program intimately weaves volunteers into the fabric of our mission, vision, and services. Volunteers receive training to work alongside staff and provide additional support in areas ranging from reception to shelter services to our Hospitality Meal program. Volunteers play a critical role in the success of our overall operations by reducing expenses and expanding and enriching staff reach, ultimately enhancing program engagement for those we serve. This is truly a community effort. Thank you to all who bring your gift of time, talent, and resources to our women and families!



**2023 Volunteer Program Recap:**



**378** volunteers contributed a total of **3,367** hours in **1,409** instances



**10** positions were covered across 6 programs, valued at **\$107,038**



Over **\$60,225** worth of in-kind items donated



**61,320** meals provided to guests



**Events:**

**Empowerment Challenge**

The Cathedral Center’s “Empowerment Challenge” ran from March 8th, 2023, International Women’s Day, to March 15th, 2023. We challenged the community to join us in empowering women by donating to support our services that provide opportunities to women and families with children facing homelessness. The Godfrey Family Foundation and Peter Geisert matched all donations up to \$25,000 and thanks to everyone’s efforts, a total of \$52,848 was raised to empower women.



**Pathway Home**

The Cathedral Center hosted its annual Pathway Home event on July 26, 2023, at the Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery in the Great Hall. This heart-warming evening celebrated community leaders who support programs that end homelessness by awarding Danae Davis as the Woman of the Word and recognizing a former client and her family for their perseverance. The night included a silent auction, raffle, wine pull, food, drinks, music, and a moving program to make for a special night for those who make Cathedral Center’s work possible. Pathway Home was co-chaired by board members; Tony Tagliavia, Julia Fennelly, and Bill Klingsporn and made possible by our Presenting Sponsors; Johnson Financial Group, Peter Geisert, and Liz & Tom Sellars.



**Glitz & Glam**

Mainstream Boutique and Access Boutique hosted the annual sip and shop event that supports The Cathedral Center’s Employment Services Program. Glitz & Glam was the Thursday before Mother’s Day, May 11, 2023. Attendees who gave a \$10 donation at the door were able to shop while being treated to wine, snacks, a wallet pull, and a raffle. All donations plus 15-20% of the proceeds were donated to CCI.





**2023 Honor Roll and Memorial Donors:**

Thank you to the donors who make our work possible! Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this report. The Honor Roll contains contributions during 2023. Please contact the Resource Development Team at [ebarbain@cathedral-center.org](mailto:ebarbain@cathedral-center.org) with any corrections.

**\$50,000+**

Bader Philanthropies  
Friendship House of Milwaukee  
Otto Bremer Trust  
United Way of Greater Milwaukee &  
Waukesha County  
The Ursula Fund  
Zilber Family Foundation

**\$25,000 - \$49,999**

Mr. Peter Geisert  
William N. and Janice V. Godfrey Family  
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**\$10,000 - \$24,999**

Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation  
Forest County Potawatomi Foundation  
Herb Kohl Philanthropies  
Jim and Jean Ellen Trubshaw  
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Johnson Financial Group  
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Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee

**\$5,000 - \$9,999**

American Association of University  
Women  
Archie & Viola Meinerz Family  
Foundation  
Better Way Foundation  
Bert L. and Patricia S. Steigleder  
Charitable Trust  
Brewers Community Foundation  
Carrie and Jim Bedore  
Cedar Street Charitable Foundation  
Christine Symchych and James McNulty  
Crossroads Presbyterian Church  
Evan and Marion Helfaer Foundation  
Green Bay Packers Foundation  
Holy Family Congregation  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation  
Janet Bitzan  
Kohl's  
Lori J. Reiman Charitable Giving Fund  
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Sellars Absorbent Materials, Inc.  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish  
Stella H. Jones Foundation  
Union Pacific Foundation  
Weiss Family Foundation

**\$2,500 - \$4,999**

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Bonnie Patton  
Eagles for Children  
James and Ann Howard Family Fund  
of The Minneapolis Foundation  
Judith A. Keyes Family Foundation  
Messmer Foundation  
Molly and Tony Perillo  
Oak Creek United Methodist Church  
O'Leary & Anick  
Pat and Julie Hickey  
Peter and Elizabeth Saiia  
Robin Johnson  
Walmart Foundation  
Zilber Property Group  
Zonta Foundation, Inc.

**\$1,000 - \$2,499**

Aashish Rao  
All Saints' Cathedral  
Amy Baumgart  
Bill Klingsporn  
Bud and Joyce Bobber  
Cassandra Libal  
Catherine and Robert Kwapick  
Catholic Community Foundation  
Charles Sellars  
Colleen Dougherty and  
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Constance Tresch  
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Good Shepherd Catholic Church  
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Greater Milwaukee Association of  
REALTORS Youth Foundation Inc.  
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The Catholic Faith Community of St.  
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The GE Foundation  
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Helen Draney  
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Jay Warner  
John Eklund

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Kathleen Miller  
Kathryn and Jeff Huntsinger  
Kenneth Meurer and Shirley Versteegen  
Kip Mentzer  
Kristin and Matthew Carroll  
Kristin Brooks  
Kristine O'Meara  
Kyle Tuler  
Lamb of God Missionary Baptist Church  
Lee Johnson and Kathryn Frank  
Linda Motley  
Lori and Dave Leitl  
Maureen McGivern  
Margaret Crowley  
Marcia Jante and Lou Nielsen  
Manuel Orejuela  
Mainstream Boutique  
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Mary Ellen Nash  
Mary Quigley  
Mary Wilkins Peterson  
Matt Lemenager  
Michael Sullivan  
Michelle Eiler  
Milwaukee Mennonite Church, Inc.  
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Pamela and Michael Carroll  
Plymouth Church of Milwaukee  
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Robert and Joanne Reuss Ryan Tuler  
Sandra Edhlund  
Sarah Olijar  
Sharman and Richard Brown  
Sridar Maya  
Steve and Kathy Kuhn  
Terry Leonhardt  
Thomas and Deirdre Halat  
Three Holy Women Parish  
Wayne and Julie Larrivee

**\$250 - \$499**

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Amy and Kip Kussman  
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Anthony and Ann Marie Schiel  
August Ray  
Avrum Lank  
Bill and Bo Dowsett  
Bright Funds  
British-American Project  
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Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Sally Fernandes  
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Sarah Mack  
Sarah and Perry Robinson  
Scott and Stephanie Skorik  
Scott Furmanski  
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Sherry King  
Sue Ellen and Peter Baye  
Sue Sala  
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Susan Sala  
Suzanne Cornell  
Thomas and Kathleen Huevler  
Thomas Osowski  
Thomas Stilp  
Timothy Brown  
Timothy Enright  
Tianhe Mu  
Vincent Lyles  
Wendy Jabas  
Willie Johnson Jr.

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Kathryn Campbell  
Mary Jane & Herb Walker  
Diane Markovitz  
Lisa Wantock  
James & Carol Spangler  
Mary Ann & Art Wigchers  
The Peavler Family  
Ms. Joan Shrout  
Edward Calvey

**In Memory of Hugh McManus (cont.)**

William & Claudette Finke  
Anthony & Margaret Scola  
Angela & Donald Pienkos  
Susan Tofte  
Ann Pesch  
Julie Pesch  
Isaac & Carri Brewer  
Robert Smith  
Joan Trainor  
Carla & Timothy Kramoris  
Diane Knight & Mona Hietpas  
Roger & Mary Beth Hill  
Ann Marie Wick

**In Memory of Keisha Johnson**

Carleigh Krubiner  
Aaron Hebeisen  
Gregory Liebergen  
Storm Sixeas

**In Memory of Cindy Krause & Katy Ferguson**

Diana and Richard Pine

**In Memory of Elizabeth Hooyman**

Thomas and Kathleen Huevler  
Thomas Hooyman

**In Memory of Angela Radtke**

Karen and Jeffrey Kuderski  
John and Debra Fuller  
Lori Baker-Kusnierewicz

**In Memory of Mary Lou Meurer**

Julie and Joseph Laur  
Kenneth Meurer and Shirley Versteegen

**In Memory of Rita Zappen**

Peg Zappen

**In Memory of Gerri Geischer**

Janet Zoltan

**In Memory of Bonnie Liss**

Ellen & Jim Shiflet

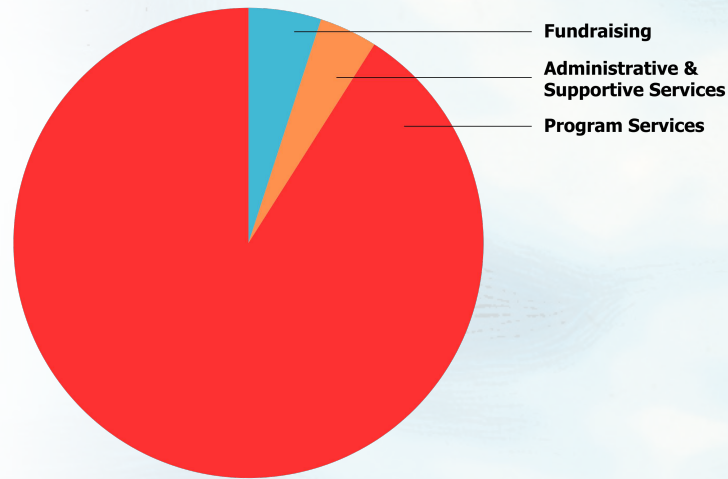
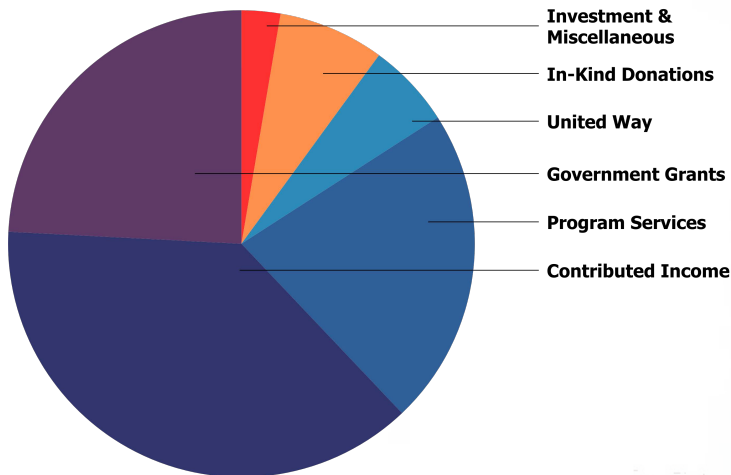
**In Memory of Anne & James Wolter**

Katherine Hermes

**In Memory of Ann & James Howard**

Mark Jones

## 2023 Financial Report



### Revenues:

Government Grants \$655,438 --- 24%  
 Contributed Income \$1,027,208 – 38%  
 Program Services \$596,695 --- 22%  
 United Way \$159,109 --- 6%  
 In-Kind Donations \$199,142 --- 7%  
 Investment & Miscellaneous \$72,869 -- 3%  
**TOTAL REVENUE \$2,710,461**

### Expense:

Program Services \$2,292,814--- 91%  
 Administrative and Supportive Services \$108,708 --- 4%  
 Fundraising \$129,889 --- 5%  
**TOTAL EXPENSE \$2,531,411**  
 Change in net assets \$172,098  
 Beginning of year \$2,517,884  
 End of year \$2,689,982  
*\*Net asset change reflects funds received in 2023 and released for use in 2024.*

### Thank You:

After 20-plus years of working to end homelessness for women and families with children, we are proud of our collaborations, building on existing resources in our community. We are partners with you and are incredibly grateful!

### To get involved:

- Make a Donation on our website at [www.cathedral-center.org/donate](http://www.cathedral-center.org/donate)
- Volunteer
- Participate in our Hospitality Meal Program
- Join our email list

To learn more about other ways to get involved, contact Anita Alfaro at [aalfaro@cathedral-center.org](mailto:aalfaro@cathedral-center.org) or **(414) 831-0394, ext. 2127.**



Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County