



*Bethany*House®

Annual Report 2024
A Year of Planning and Innovation



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Arrante".

Bonnie Arrante
Board Chair

This year has been one of ***planning and innovation*** for Bethany House, driven by the leadership of our Executive Director, Katie Swanson. With her extensive experience in working with vulnerable populations, including her previous role as Deputy Director of Emergency Housing in Nassau County, Katie has infused the organization with fresh energy and innovative ideas that have deepened our impact.

At Bethany House, we believe we are more than just a shelter; we are a place where lives are transformed. Over the past year, we've made significant investments in our spaces, our staff, and most importantly, in the guests we serve—always with a focus on fostering stability. Please see our “Achievements in 2024” page for more about the programs we implemented, and the exciting innovations that took place this past year.

At Bethany House, our mission has always been to do more than simply provide shelter—we are committed to offering a comprehensive support system that empowers our guests to rebuild their lives. As we look to the future, it is clear why Bethany House is such a vital resource for Long Island. We don't just offer a place to stay; we offer a chance for renewal and hope. Our guests are in their most vulnerable and challenging phase of their lives, and are able to stay within their communities, and are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives with the support of a compassionate community. With home-like facilities, dedicated staff and services, and measurable impact, Bethany House stands as a beacon of hope in our region.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Swanson".

Katie Swanson
Executive Director

Homelessness is a growing crisis that many communities are struggling to manage. As institutions that once housed many of our most vulnerable populations close or downsize, the number of individuals living without a stable home continues to rise. It is often said that a society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members, a principle I have reflected on throughout my long career working with those experiencing homelessness.

At Bethany House, we are committed to empowering the women we serve, helping them achieve self-sufficiency and a better future. However, a significant challenge remains — housing has become increasingly out of reach for many. We have women with steady jobs, including positions with government agencies, yet they still cannot afford rent while covering transportation and other essential expenses.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting these women. As we expand our efforts, we hope to drive meaningful change in the broader landscape of affordable housing.

Bethany House provides a safe place for healing and personal growth for women, and women with children, experiencing homelessness. It is built on a foundation of community support to provide a continuum of care, from uncertainty to stability.

Through our partnerships, we provide the women in our programs with trauma informed services, in-house and community-based health services, and case management focused on securing educational and employment growth opportunities and a path to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

We strive for our guests and their children to experience a sense of self-worth and belonging in response to their experience with our dedicated staff and volunteers.

Founded in 1978, Bethany House supports women, and women with children, on Long Island who are experiencing homelessness. We provide a continuum of care to take these individuals from uncertainty to stability.

At its core, Safe Ground for Families is a three-tiered, multi-generational program that seeks to break the cycle of homelessness. The three steps are:

- **Step I:** Emergency shelter and case management – food, clothing and shelter; child and family recreation; social work; milieu treatment; maintenance; meal preparation; program and volunteer coordination and health services offered directly by Bethany House with the support of the Nassau County Department of Social Services and corporate and community-based organizations
- **Step II:** Transitional living services, and semi-independent living provided in a Bethany House residence (opened August 2023) – Women’s Empowerment Groups; individual and family counseling; early childhood services provided in partnership with universities and other community-based organizations
- **Step III:** Independent living with optional support services, aftercare services, provided by Bethany House and funded through foundations, grants and contributions.

With this approach, we provide services intended to prevent **homelessness recidivism**, ensure **child health and wellness**, enable the achievement of **educational and career goals**, facilitate **secure employment** with **sustainable income**, and enable **greater earning potential**, and thus, the ability to **build savings**.

Long-term stability through meaningful interventions

Across our homes we were noticing that many of the women we serve were suffering with symptoms of mental health challenges. We realized that two things needed to be done. We needed to get the women to see the value of mental health treatment and to help them develop habits such as getting up and out every day.

To address those needs, we hired a highly regarded clinician who specializes in mental health awareness training, and he is someone who seems to connect with everyone he teaches. He conducted a series of workshops at each shelter, meeting with small groups of women to foster a sense of familiarity and trust. He explained to them what trauma does to the brain and gave them some real understanding of why they were struggling. He discussed "self-medicating" and why people chose certain means of "self-medicating." He gave them many coping strategies and a deeper understanding of why therapy will help manage their symptoms.

Once the workshop series was completed, we used our close relationships with the surrounding mental health facilities to make it easy for the women to begin therapy.

Feedback from participants included remarks such as, *"I no longer feel stuck"* and *"You made me less scared."*



The second part of our approach was to have the guests leave the shelter weekdays for a few hours. During this time we provide structured programming, food and general support at a stand-alone facility we have nicknamed the "She Shed." This space serves multiple purposes – at times we are helping women write their resumes and find jobs, and at times it is simply a place where someone struggling can connect with others and feel less alone.

Both programs have been met with great success. At Bethany House, we understand that long-term stability is built on a foundation of small yet meaningful interventions. We remain committed to identifying and implementing innovative strategies that empower the women we serve, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to thrive.

The Bethany House Board of Directors has adopted a Five Year Strategic Plan after conducting a SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. In 2028, it will be 50 years since a small group of Dominican sisters from Amityville took it upon themselves to address the need for shelter on the South Shore of Long Island. The Board asked, what does Bethany House want to look like at 50?

Make BH a Great Place to Work

- Analyze compensation/benefits to ensure they are adequately addressed
- Training, a key to smooth operations and staff motivation, has an opportunity for additional planning/budgeting/partnering
- Leverage consultants to enhance our capabilities

Expand BH Footprint

- Expand numbers served and how served
- Consider real estate expansion both in shorter and longer terms
- Explore partnerships which can accelerate/enhance our mission

Drive an Ambitious Capital Growth Initiative

- Celebrate our 50th anniversary with growth target by 2028
- Create a trajectory of financial security and independence
- Continue current efforts with additional initiatives

In 2024, we:

1. Secured a legislative grant from Senator Kevin Thomas and a NYS infrastructure grant for significant kitchen/bathroom capital improvements at two of the emergency shelters
2. Implemented structured day time programming for residents in our newly refurbished “She Shed,” which serves as a vibrant hub for arts programs, mental health discussions, yoga and more
3. Introduced recurring Mental Health and Self-Care Awareness workshop series for residents
4. Addressed components of our five-year Strategic Plan:
 - a. Make Bethany House a great place to work:
 - 1) Completed a compensation analysis to create job bands/scopes with the assistance of Newport Group, and updated salaries as necessary
 - 2) Hired an HR firm to manage payroll to ensure current, legally compliant best practices
 - 3) Offered Mental Health and Self-Care Awareness workshop series for staff
 - b. Expand BH Footprint:
 - 1) Board committed to purchasing and developing an additional emergency shelter for single women in 2025/2026 to address the shortage of emergency shelter beds in Nassau County
 - 2) Filled our Step III Bellmore apartments in collaboration with CDCLI (including funding of \$5000 per apartment for upgrades), offering families permanent housing to break the cycle of homelessness
 - c. Capital Growth Initiative: Created and implemented an investment policy
5. Continued to expand our list of partnerships with volunteers, community-based service organizations, corporate partners, foundations and individual donors
6. Completed a comprehensive reorganization of supplies, facilities and offices with the assistance of dedicated volunteers and staff, and with substantial donations from and collaboration with Ikea; creation of “boutiques” where guests can shop from extensive donated goods.

Our partners in the community are an integral part of the services we provide, both directly and indirectly, as we work to fulfill our mission. These partners include government, local universities, local public and private school PTAs and honor societies, houses of worship, businesses, private and corporate foundations, and individual donors and volunteers. Over this past year, *volunteers* have helped out in innumerable ways, from fulfilling basic needs to bringing joy and a sense of community! In addition to organizing fundraisers and drives for supplies for the homes, pictured on the cover page, volunteers have provided:

- Direct services, such as art and crafts activities, yoga, reading groups, and cooking classes for the women and for the children



Paint n' Sip Night by Janiece

- Birthday and holiday celebrations! With delicious meals, and stunning cakes and gifts for women and children



Easter Cake by Lily J. Sweets



Fashion Show 2024 Models

- Beautiful and successful annual fundraising events, planned, organized and executed by our own Development & Communications Committee (DCC), which is 85% volunteers!

How support and trust can lead to significant life changes

At Bethany House, we foster a sense of family, ensuring that everyone who walks through our doors is met with compassion and respect. Many of the women we serve lack supportive networks, making their journey through homelessness even more challenging.

One of our guests came to us barely an adult. Andrea was housed with her parents who had their struggles with addiction that made it hard for them to support or care for their children.



Bethany House provided a home for Andrea and the support she has never had before.

It can be hard to accept and trust help, especially when you have never been able to rely on anyone before. After a short time Andrea realized she could trust those around her and Bethany House as a whole. She actually said, "I couldn't stand you guys at first but now I see you only had my best interest at heart."

With the steady support of our staff, Andrea has gained solid employment with a pension and engaged in therapy, and from that made many small meaningful changes in her life. She has saved money and is ready to move into permanent housing. She feels safe and knows that she will always have her Bethany House Family if she needs support. Knowing that you always have people to fall back on, that you will never go hungry, is what people need to feel safe enough to go out into the world!

The following is an overview of Bethany House's income and expenses for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024.

Total Support & Revenue:	\$2,892,207
Program Expenses:	\$1,981,380
Management & General Expenses:	\$ 382,244
Fundraising Expenses:	<u>\$ 49,932</u>
Total Expenses:	\$2,413,556
 Total Assets:	 \$4,437,877
Total Liabilities:	<u>\$ 144,211</u>
Ending Net Assets:	\$4,293,666

Bethany House of Nassau County Corporation is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Chairperson
Vice Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Members

Bonnie Ryan Arrante
Ellen Furuya
Martin Baicker
Lennae Adams
Janet DeLuca
Kerry Gillick-Goldberg
Lisa King
Alex Lipton
James Lowe
Gloria Romanowski
Christine Vetrano
Angela Zimmerman

PHOTOS on Cover Page: **Top Row**, Upstanders Club of North Shore Towers (goods drive); Golf & Tennis Outing 2024 (Board Chair Bonnie Arrante presenting to Honoree, Chris Accomando of Sceptre Vacations); Garden Tour 2024; Residential Director Carmen Mayo delighted with donated snack packs; Board Vice Chair Ellen Furuya admiring plaque presented to retiree Teresa Little, Administrative Assistant; **Bottom Row** – Boy Scout Troop 214 of Rockville Centre and Baldwin (paper goods drive); HS Graduation Gap designed by Young Mother; Imagine Awards LI (Social Impact Award Finalist).



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