

Building a Bridge to the Future



IMPACT REPORT

June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024

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FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear SSCOH Community,

As I reflect on our 41st year, I'm proud of how Southside Center of Hope continues to support women and children in Chicago in life-changing ways. **And I'm proud of the ways our friends and supporters like YOU have shown up for us in tangible ways.**

The theme for this year's Annual Report is "Building a Bridge to the Future."

From its beginnings in 1983, Southside Center of Hope has been a bridge to a brighter future for women in need of compassion and a fresh start.

We've provided housing, recovery services, access to healthcare and job training, and a wealth of other social services – all to empower women to transform their and their children's futures.

And there's another reason for "Building a Bridge to the Future" as our theme:

SSCOH is in an exciting season of possibility:

- Our 41st year was the first since 2010 that we did not run a budget deficit.
- Our management of Independence House has given us new avenues for impacting women and children.
- We are actively planning our recovery program's reopening, which will incorporate updated best practices and partnerships for treating substance use disorders.

We are building a bridge to the future of Southside Center of Hope.

We will always remember and honor our history, though, as the foundation and inspiration for our future.

To that end, I'm excited to share a new interview with one of our founders, Sister Therese O'Sullivan.

For longtime supporters of our work, Sister Therese is a beloved leader, and you will no doubt be inspired by her memories and words of encouragement.

For newer followers, her interview will give you a greater understanding of how our work started and the values that guide us every step of the way.

As Sister Therese reminds us, this work has always been challenging and requires perseverance, generosity, and hope.

But, together with partners like you, Southside Center of Hope will continue to be a bridge-builder for women and children seeking a brighter future.

Thank you for your continued support,

Yaisa Hagood

Yaisa Hagood
Executive Director



Mission

To provide housing and a continuum of supportive services to women and children in underserved communities to empower them to transform their lives.

Vision

SSCOH works to realize a social and economic future where all women are integrated, equitable, and engaged society members through housing, employment, education, and community support services.

“SSCOH is a bridge to a brighter future for women in need of compassion and a fresh start.”

Yaisa Hagood,
Executive Director

A CONVERSATION WITH SISTER THERESE



Starting with 15 dollars and 19 beds, Sister Therese O'Sullivan and Sister Connie Driscoll rehabbed an old drug store building to start a homeless shelter for women and their children in 1983.

They named the shelter St. Martin de Porres House of Hope, after a saint known for his tireless hospitality and care for the poor and sick. In the early 1990s, the shelter transitioned into a recovery home.

The Sisters worked for decades to help thousands of women and children break free from addiction and its effects. Sister Connie passed away in 2005 at the age of 72. In 2016, Sister Therese retired after serving 30 years as Executive Director and named Yaisa Hagood her successor. In 2019, St. Martin de Porres House of Hope became Southside Center of Hope.

Sister Therese remains a beloved member of our community, and we recently sat down with her to chat about SSCOH's past and its future.

Sister Therese, I know the SSCOH community would love an update. How are you?

I now live at Mercy Circle, a home for senior citizens. We are mostly nuns, and we each have a little apartment. I live on the assisted living side and receive a lot of medical services. It's a wonderful place to live on the Southside of Chicago, and I'm very happy here!

When you look back on your work at St. Martin

de Porres House of Hope, what do you remember most?

It was the most gratifying ministry I ever was in. It was hard many times, but other times, it was beautiful to see a person change their life and have a life to live.

During your time at St. Martin's, how did your work change and evolve?

Sister Connie and I started in 1983 in a very small area on 65th and Woodlawn. We rented a building and lived in it as we were rebuilding it. The shelter residents would move from one section of the building to another as we did renovations. We grew so fast we had to build an extension. There was always construction, but the women were very, very patient.

The Archdiocese of Chicago eventually sold it to us for \$10. We always had repairs to do, but we kept going, kept building the program to help the women. We added parenting classes and a preschool program.

We decided to start a recovery program because the need was so great, and it was a very good program. Eventually, though, we realized we couldn't run both a shelter and a recovery program. We decided to concentrate on our recovery program.

The past few years have been challenging for Southside Center of Hope. Can you think of similar periods of struggle during your time of leadership, and how did you get through them?

Our beginnings were very difficult because we



had no money. We received donations of basic supplies, like bedding. But we couldn't even get bedspreads for several years because we couldn't afford it!

You know, there was always a struggle. One time our kitchen had shelves with hardly any food on them. And someone came to the door – a priest from a parish way out South [in the suburbs]. He had a truckload of food, so much food we didn't even have room for it all!

I answered the door and said, "Oh my God!" The priest said, "Nobody ever called me God before!"

He brought so much food we didn't even have room for it all.

So many people helped us at different points in our history. It was a beautiful thing. And if they couldn't give money, they gave services.

SSCOH is managing Independence House, a permanent affordable housing facility for women and children, and providing case management for the residents. Does that work feel faithful to your original mission at St. Martin's?

Well, we started that way, working with the homeless and with children in a preschool that provided education for them.

I'll tell you a story. I'm still in touch with a woman named Mae. She and her family moved around from shelter to shelter, and we were the fourth shelter they lived in. At the time, Mae was only 10. She called me recently and said, "Thank you for what you did for me. That experience was the first time I learned about being responsible. I learned to appreciate people and respect myself."

Now she owns an engineering company with projects all over the Midwest and South, and she tells people, "I was homeless, but when I was 10, I had the chance to see what my future could be."

That's the effect Southside Center of Hope is having with their work at Independence House.

They're touching people who need structure, warmth, and to learn to love themselves.

SSCOH is working to reopen its recovery program, but it might look a little different than the recovery program you were part of. How do you feel about that?

Oh, I'm sure it will be different! The important thing is for women to get into a program and go to meetings where they can make friends who will support them. You can talk to some of the old timers who were there when we first started our program, and they are still friends after 25 and 30 years. They have a strong group, but they still go to meetings.

What are your hopes for SSCOH going forward? What do you want it to be known for?

I hope the women who SSCOH serves bond as a group and help each other. I want them to become strong women and connected to each other. Often, these women have been kicked around. They're separated from their families. They've had a really rough time, and they need to resolve those issues.

I hope the children of SSCOH feel accepted and loved and grow and then go out on their own when they're able. And I hope that SSCOH still works to help women get employed while in recovery, to teach them computer skills, interviewing skills, etc.

What final thoughts or words of encouragement do you have for supporters of SSCOH?

I would encourage long time members who supported us when we were St Martin's to continue to support Southside Center of Hope. They need to be funded. They need to receive gifts.

Yaisa is a talented and gifted woman, and I know she has SSCOH on the right path. I know there have been hard times, but I'd encourage you to give what you can to help Southside Center of Hope.

So many people helped us at different points in our history. It was a beautiful thing.

INDEPENDENCE HOUSE



Independence House is a 25-unit affordable housing facility in the North Lawndale neighborhood that provides a safe place for formerly unhoused families to find stability and security. Southside Center of Hope has managed Independence House and provided case management for residents since July 2023.

The Need

84% of families experiencing homelessness are headed by women.

92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse.

Among industrialized nations, the United States has the largest number of homeless women and children.

(Source: <https://www.greendoors.org/facts/family-homelessness.php>)

Eligibility requirements for Independence House

- Be a mom with children
- Meet the definition of chronic homelessness
- Have a disability, which could be a substance use disorder, a physical disability, or a behavioral health diagnosis



OUR IMPACT



WHO WE SERVE

96% families who live below the federal poverty level

100% heads of households with a diagnosed mental or physical illness

95% African American families

58% heads of households over the age of 45

Southside Center of Hope serves female heads of households.

IMPACT

100% of families maintained their permanent supportive housing.

2 new families were housed in fully furnished apartments at Independence House.

70 adults and 30 children received housing and case management services.

53,928 nights of safe, secure housing were provided.

100% of child residents attended school and received all required vaccinations.

1,560 supportive interactions between SSCOH staff and residents.

42% of heads of household worked full or part-time.

SERVICES OUR CASE MANAGERS PROVIDE

- Assist tenants with identifying and pursuing goals
- Educational services
- Vocational services
- Counseling
- Addiction recovery support
- Socialization and recreational activities
- Life skills education
- Medication management
- Transportation
- Referrals to community resources
- Parenting skills education

RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES AT INDEPENDENCE HOUSE

Art Club for kids

Cooking Club to learn to make budget-friendly, nutritious meals

Job Club to provide support, networking, and job seeking skills

"Paint and Sip" for Moms to create art, enjoy sparkling juice, and make friends

Birthday celebrations

Care packages (blankets, toothpaste, towels, pajamas, etc.) and furniture for new residents

Movie Nights for kids

Back to School Backpack Giveaway

Thanksgiving Meal Kits

Winter Essentials Giveaway

Christmas Party

Mother's Day Gift Baskets



ONE FAMILY'S STORY



The last few years were stressful and chaotic for the Cernak family.

They'd been without a home since January 1, 2020. The upheaval of the COVID pandemic only made their situation more perilous.

When the family – a mom and two children – was found living under a bridge near the Lathrop Homes on the Northside of the city, they were temporarily housed through a program which provides temporary housing.

They then endured several more moves to temporary living situations. This instability meant they were not able to accumulate and transport belongings. As a result, they had very little in the form of personal possessions.

This is painful for everyone, but, for small children, not being able to bring your special toys and stuffed animals when you move is especially hard!

Starting over is challenging, but the family received the gift of a fresh start at Independence House this spring.

The mom had a new baby in May, and the family now includes three children. This mom will have the peace of mind that comes from knowing her children have a safe home to sleep, rest, play, and grow up in. Her children will know their toys, clothes, and special belongings will also be safe.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Wilbur Warner Trust, we were able to furnish their apartment!

We look forward to watching the Cernaks flourish in their new home, thanks to the generosity of donors like YOU!

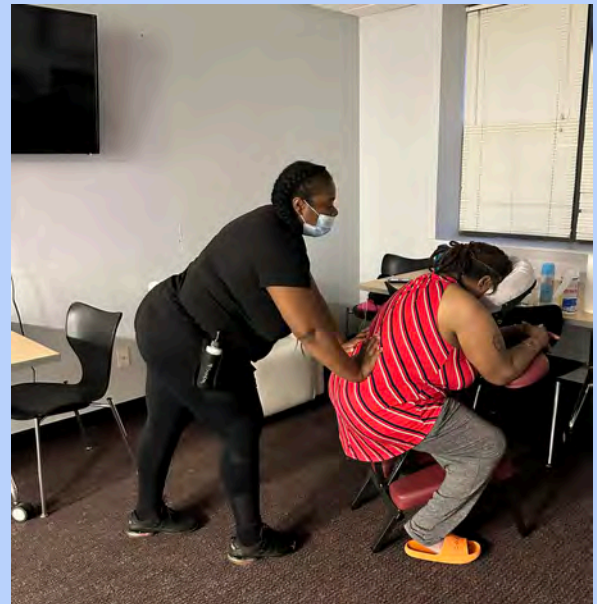
Independence House Is Giving Hope!



GIVING HOPE!

Everybody deserves a decent place to live regardless of what they've been through. If you help people know their basic needs will be met, there will be less crime in the world and less hurt, less poverty.

Coketha Hendricks, MSW, LCSW, CCTP, Clinical
Supervisor at Independence House

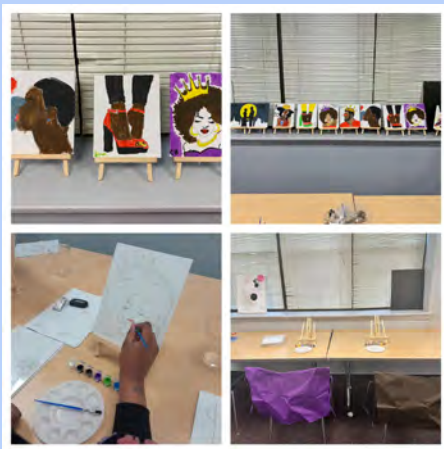


A story of hope

With the help of Matthews House, another nonprofit organization that works with unhoused homeless populations, we were able to house a single mom of two young boys this year. The young mother was not only homeless, but unemployed without any source of income. We were able to provide the family with a furnished 3-bedroom apartment thanks to generous donors and the Chicago Furniture bank. Since moving in, all children have been able to receive medical care, are up to date on their vaccinations, and enrolled in school and daycare. Mom is working!

I might have to give a hug or hold a hand. These are the things that come with the job. Because if you want to build and save lives, you can't just go in with a checklist and say, okay, I want you to do this, this, and this. They want to see that you really care.

Toby Austin, Case Manager,
Independence House



A story of hope

We also housed a family of four this year who previously lived in a run-down, vermin and insect-infested apartment. With the help of Volunteers of America, we provided this family with a furnished 2-bedroom apartment that included special accommodations for the newborn who arrived right before the lease sign date. Generous donations allowed us to give this family the stability they needed to maintain their mental and physical health in a safe environment.

We're working to make our next year our best!

NEW INDEPENDENCE HOUSE FOOD PROGRAM

SSCOH was awarded a \$25,000 Illinois Charitable Trust Grant from the State Treasurer. The grant will be used to fund a new Independence House food program. We are partnering with Top Box Foods to provide food kits designed to feed a family of four and to provide high quality, affordable, and nutritious foods. Many of our residents are food insecure, so these food kits

will be life changing!

We are also partnering with The University of Illinois at Chicago's Eat. Move. Save program. A nutritionist will come onsite to discuss the importance of healthy eating and do a food demonstration with the tenants in our community kitchen.

RECOVERY PROGRAM REOPENING PLANS

GOAL: To reopen a recovery program on the Southside of Chicago that includes a residential program, an outpatient program, and a workforce development program.

Reopening our Recovery Program is a priority because it is a pillar of Southside Center of Hope's legacy - and because the need is urgent.

We have started looking for property to rent for the program, and we've met with several alders to build relationships, gain support for our reopening, and ensure we have no

zoning obstacles. In addition, we've hired a consultant to help us strategize about funding and programming options.

The recovery landscape has changed dramatically since Sisters Connie and Therese started their recovery program, and we want to reimagine our program with the current best practices. We also want to ensure we are maximizing our community's resources through organizational partnerships that give our donors the biggest return on their investment.

Together, we are empowering women and children to transform their lives.

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

(JUNE 1, 2023 - MAY 31, 2024)

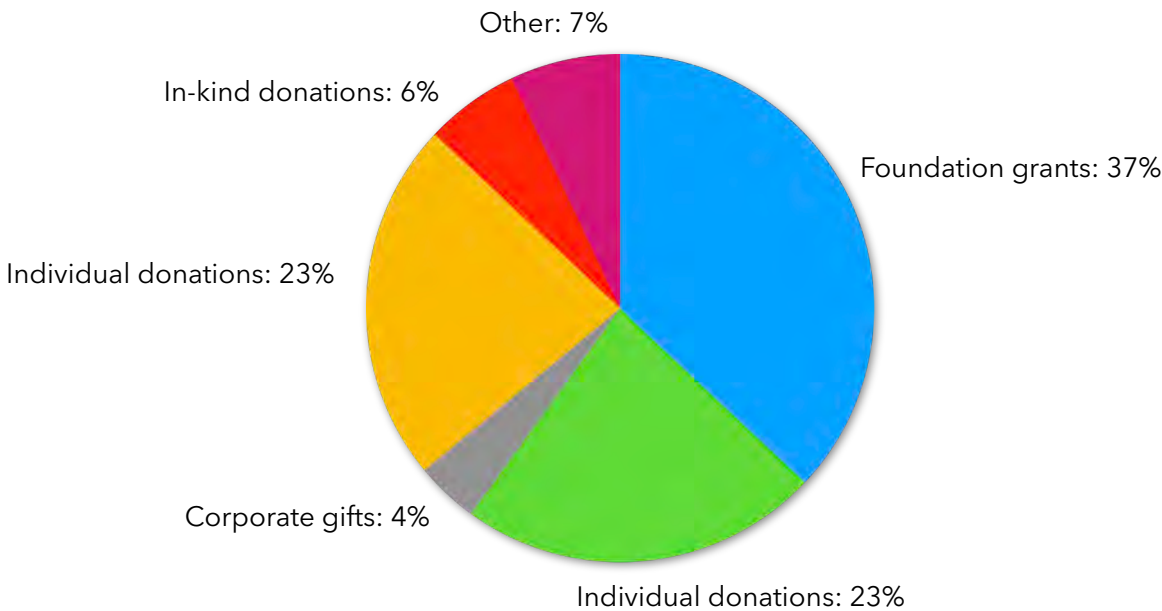
For the first time since 2010, Southside Center of Hope did not end our fiscal year with a budget deficit. **Your generosity ensures the future will be bright for our organization and those we serve.**

INCOME	
Foundations	\$200,972
Individuals	\$124,312
Corporations	\$23,350
Program Revenue	\$128,000
In-Kind Donations	\$30,483
Net Investment Return	\$33,624
Misc. Income	\$175
Gain on Sale of Fixed Assets	\$6,498
TOTAL INCOME	\$547,414

EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$233,120
Management & General	\$110,167
Fundraising	\$84,752
Total Expenses	\$428,039



HOW WE ARE FUNDED:



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*Thank you to the corporations, organizations, and foundations who make our work possible! **You are part of a 42-year legacy of giving hope to women and children on Chicago's Southside!***

B & D Foundation

Charities Aid Foundation of America

Chicago Foundation for Women

Helen Brach Foundation

JP Morgan Chase Foundation

Judy Family Foundation

Lannan Foundation

Legacy Global Foundation, Inc.

Marguerite DeLany Hark Foundation

Mount Carmel High School

Northern Trust Charitable

Reva and David Logan Foundation

St. Barnabas Church

The Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation

The Knight Family Foundation

The North Shore Baptist Church

University of Chicago Service League

W.P. & H.B. White Foundation

LEADERSHIP

Our team brings a wealth of experience, wisdom, and perspectives to this work. We're grateful for their gifts, skills, and passion for our mission.

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LET'S GROW OUR IMPACT AND YOUR LEGACY!

Whether you've followed our work for decades or for days, we need your support to empower women and children to change their lives!

RECURRING DONATIONS

Monthly donations are the backbone of our financial sustainability. If you believe in our legacy and in our future, a monthly recurring donation in any amount is invaluable to our work. Set up your monthly donation today at the link below.

ONE-TIME GIFT

Make a one-time donation to show your support for our work at the link below!

LEGACY INVESTMENT

Ensure your values are honored with a legacy gift to Southside Center of Hope! Visit FreeWill to make your 100% legal will for free today. Have a Legacy Gift to Southside Center of Hope planned already? Please visit the link below today to let us know so we can be sure to properly acknowledge your gift!




TO MAKE A GIFT TODAY, VISIT:

www.SouthsideCenterOfHope.org/Get-Involved/Support-Our-Work

VOLUNTEER

Are you local and looking for a volunteer opportunity for yourself or your organization? To learn more about how you can make a difference for women and children with Southside Center of Hope, please call 773-643-5843 or email info@sscoh.org today!

STAY CONNECTED

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-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/southsidecenterofhope/>
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Thank you
to everyone who attended our
40th Anniversary Celebration





Together, we are empowering women and
children to transform their lives.

Thank you!

SOUTHSIDE CENTER OF HOPE

(773) 643-5843

www.southsidecenterofhope.org

