



Where families stay together

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Mission

To provide families in Belknap County safe shelter when children are especially at-risk during homelessness; to empower families to become self-sufficient and independent by providing them with opportunities for education and access to community resources.



Leadership Report

Dear Friends,

In March 2022, Belknap House reached its five-year milestone of providing safe shelter to children and empowering parents to become independent. Belknap House began operating as a year-round shelter in October 2019, when the Board learned there was a 43% increase in family homelessness in Belknap Country from 2016-2018, as reported by the NH Coalition to End Homelessness.

Belknap House is an essential business that is open and operational 24/7 providing vital emergency shelter for families. Our dedicated staff and volunteers continued to work at the shelter as we adjusted our services and operations to meet the challenges of the COVID pandemic. We developed and implemented COVID protocols and procedures, including weekly testing, to keep our staff and residents safe. We also installed a new air filtration system. Although we had some staff and residents test positive for COVID, no one required hospitalization and the procedures implemented kept many healthy.

We rely on donors and grants to provide financial support and our volunteers to complement our staff. With the advent of COVID and a subsequent drop in the number of volunteers willing to come to the shelter, we became more dependent on staff, who worked diligently to keep the shelter running smoothly and families safe. We were fortunate to have several volunteers continue to help with meal preparations, office duties, driving our BH van, and facilitate children activities.

In January 2022, Don House began his role as Board President replacing Colleen Garrity. For the last six years he served as Vice President. The Board is especially thankful to Colleen Garrity for her leadership and dedication to the mission of Belknap House. She served as Board President for the first seven years of the organization. She helped Belknap House achieve financial stability and oversaw the renovation of the facility. She runs our annual golf tournament which is usually our top fundraising event of the year. The Board also thanks our Treasurer, Alicia Hansen, who is leaving to spend more time with her infant.

Throughout these uncertain times, we will continue to focus on fulfilling our mission to help homeless families' secure permanent housing. Despite the scarcity of affordable housing, we are proud to have helped five families move to stable housing during the last year.

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, Board of Directors, staff, and partner agencies for your support over the past year. These efforts helped us protect and meet the needs of families in our community who were experiencing homelessness. We are grateful to you for dedicating your time, talents, and resources to our mission.

Don House, President

Don House

Paula Ferenc, Executive Director

Paula Ferenc

The History of Belknap House

Belknap House began with a small coalition of community members who worked with homeless families and found there was no place for families to stay when experiencing homelessness, especially during the extremely cold winter months. Families were living in cars and “couch-surfing” from one temporary home to the next. Not only were children exposed to the elements, but also lacked sufficient food and nutrition. Inadequate resources overwhelmed and caused great stress for parents and children. For families, the availability of emergency housing in Belknap County was lacking; there were just three rooms available for families at one shelter. Beyond those three rooms, the best any agency could provide was a hotel room for a couple of nights. But a hotel lacks cooking facilities and workers who could help create a plan to get the family back on their feet. The glaring lack of services available to help homeless families ignited the drive and passion to create Belknap House.



Four local community members began meeting weekly in May 2014, discussing, and devising a business and operational plan. By November 2014, Belknap House was recognized as a 501c(3) non-profit in the State of NH. Yet, there was a problem. Belknap House itself was homeless. A board was formed, and the real work began.

A building was needed to house families and fundraising began in earnest with the first annual golf tournament in August 2014. There were many fundraising events to follow. Finally, a perfect building was found on Court St in Laconia. It could accommodate many families and had space for them to relax and be together. It also had office and storage space. Next, began the long process of acquiring financial funding from a bank, as well as generating support from local citizens and businesses. Speaking engagements were booked, and an all-out publicity campaign began to let everyone know who Belknap House was and what services we would provide.



In 2016, 200 Court St, Laconia was purchased and renovations began. Many unexpected bumps occurred along the way. Asbestos was found in spaces and had to be removed safely and carefully. Lead paint was on every inch of painted wood and walls; therefore, everything was brought down to the studs. Walls were moved, all plumbing and electrical were replaced, and a state-of-the-art fire alarm and sprinkler system were installed. A local artist donated her time and energy to design the interior decorations and color schemes for the house. Numerous individuals and groups came in and painted walls, ceilings and trim. Families, churches, civic organizations, and

businesses adopted rooms and purchased furniture, blinds, curtains and bedding. The local high school building trades program made the sturdiest bunk beds ever created. The sagging front porch was rebuilt and made safe for all to enjoy. The goal was to create a space that was a “home” and not an institution.

The History of Belknap House

After one year of renovations, and a lot of sweat and tears, Belknap House opened its doors on March 1, 2017 as a cold weather shelter from October to May. News of Belknap House's opening spread, and local welfare offices began sending families. Our bedrooms were occupied and tiny feet were kept warm. Meals were prepared in the two kitchens, and laughter filled the air. Case managers were busy helping families develop goals and devise a plan to live independently by providing them with opportunities for education. Residents enrolled in parenting classes, cooking and nutrition classes, and financial fitness classes. These classes were designed to meet parents' needs and impart the necessary skills that they were lacking. They learned the habits, skills, and dispositions of being good tenants and good parents.

During 2019, family homelessness exploded in Belknap County and the Board responded by reopening the shelter in October 2019 as a year-round shelter. Our doors have remained open year-round since.

For families staying at the shelter, the Covid pandemic created additional issues -- with nowhere to go, parents became teachers and there was a constant flow of fear and concern for their families. It has been a trying time for all.

One day a 4-year-old arrived back from pre-school and quickly announced, "I'm home!" to everyone in the office. Tears and laughter were experienced by all who heard this boisterous little boy make his announcement. We all knew then, that Belknap House had achieved its goal to be a home. We made it!

Thank you -- to everyone who helped Belknap House achieve the goal to open our doors and to so many who help us keep our doors open. We are truly blessed . "It takes a village."



Facts and Figures



Belknap House provided **5,374** nights of shelter for
14 Families, 24 Children, 20 Parents
3 Pregnant Moms, 10 Single Moms in 2021



\$11,100

The value of In-Kind
Donations of Goods.



19,044

Total bed nights over the
past 5 years



50

The number of local
agencies we
collaborate with



43%

increase in family
homelessness in Belknap
County (2016-2018)



Volunteers

Gave **2255** hours
of their time in 2021



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Financials

Financial Results for 2021 Fiscal Year

Revenues:

Donations:	\$98,356
Fundraisers:	\$59,203
Grants:	\$183,728 *
Shelter Income:	<u>\$19,630</u>

Expenses:

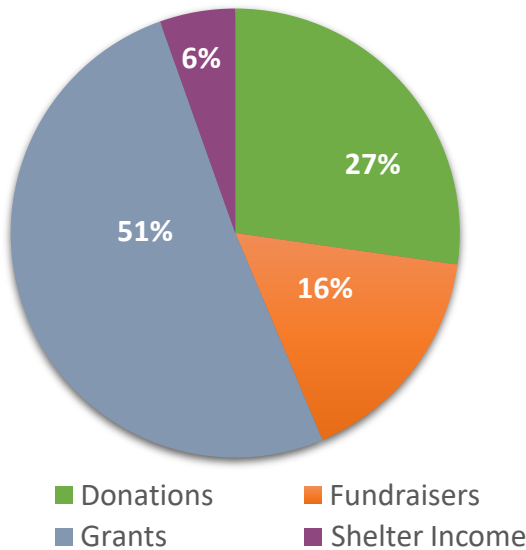
Program Services:	\$163,166
Fundraisers:	\$24,079
Administration:	<u>\$57,316</u>

Total Operating Revenue: \$360,917

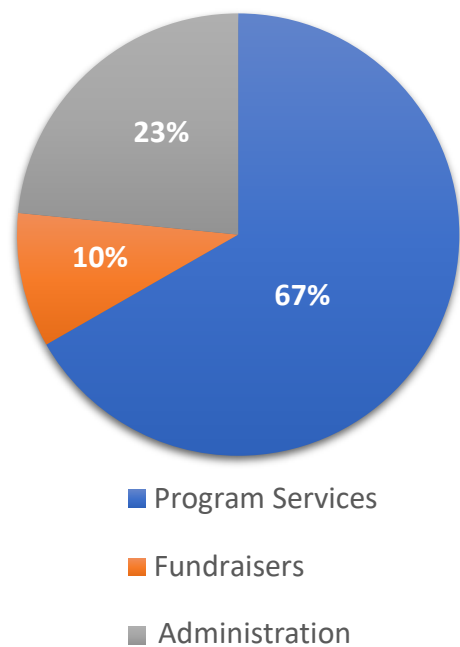
Total Operating Expenses: \$244,561

* \$38,800 in grant funding is devoted to capital improvements in 2022

Revenue



Expenses



An Empowered Mom's Story

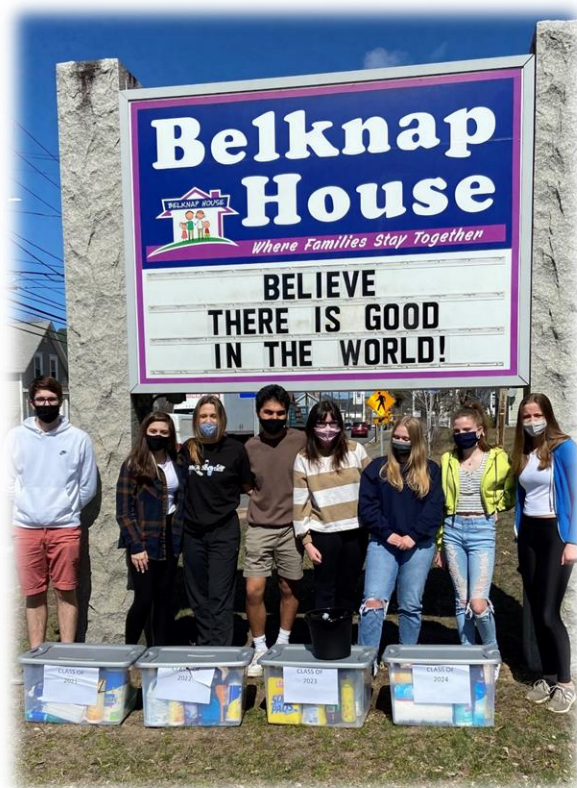
In January, during New Hampshire's coldest month, Anna and her two daughters, ages 8 and 7, and her 3-year-old son - immigrants to the United States - became homeless. Anna had heard of Belknap House and knew that it was a shelter dedicated to serving families. She needed help and support to stabilize her family in a safe and supportive environment. Of equal importance, Anna needed an environment that would empower her on her journey to becoming independent and self-sufficient.

On January 26, 2021, Anna and her children began residing at Belknap House. Working closely with the House Manager who provides case management for each family, Anna focused on fortifying her pre-existing connections with outside social agencies. Given some of the complexities and needs of the family, it was evident that her plan would require collaboration and co-ordination by *all* services provided. Most significantly, Anna's voice would have to play a pivotal role in establishing and developing her goals.

Belknap House has had the privilege of helping Anna find her voice and develop a sense of self-awareness and confidence. During the past two months, Anna has accomplished the following:

- Attended to the well-being of her family
 - Made medical and dental appointments for each of the children
 - Raised expectations regarding the children's regular attendance at school
 - Scheduled and kept medical appointments for herself
- Repaired previous tenant-landlord relationships by paying off any outstanding debts.
- Accessed and participated in programs, and agency referrals, aligned with her goals
- Learned how to manage email and effectively communicate
- Developed an understanding of the skills, habits, and dispositions of being a good tenant
- Transferred her skills and habits to managing the affairs of her family independently
- Developed her interviewing skills and secured gainful employment
- Successfully passed the U.S. Citizenship Test to become a naturalized U.S. Citizen
- Completed applications for U.S. Passports for herself and her children

By the end of June, 2021, Anna and her 3 children were reunited with her husband, their dad, and secured housing as a family.



Thank You Volunteers!



Volunteer Opportunities

Belknap House relies heavily on the generosity of volunteers.

We are actively seeking people interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- Shelter Assistants
- Fundraising
- Publicity/Marketing
- Mentoring
- Life skills classes
- Handy man/woman
- Budgeting Classes
- Occasional Childcare
- Board Members

If you would like to volunteer, visit our website for a volunteer application

Give us a call or email us at:

Tel: 603.527.8097 Email: housemgr@belknaphouse.org

A Sincere Thank You To Our Donors

Challenges continued into 2021, but with your support, Belknap House remained steadfast in providing infants, children, and their parents shelter, stability, and a customized plan to becoming self-sufficient. Together, we accessed new resources and opportunities that opened doors for families to obtain permanent housing, in the midst of a housing crisis. Together, our compassionate giving helped fade the angst of homelessness for parents, into possibilities, empowerment, and independence. Thank you!

Belknap House continues to adapt, expand, and grow, and our organization has noticeably become stronger. The charitable gifts that individual donors, faith-based communities, and civic organizations provide have been truly priceless. You sustain the heart of our work. Your contributions support daily operations of the shelter, quality services to families, and address unexpected financial needs, expenses not covered by grants or foundations.

The abundance of In-kind Donations received through the year provided families with immediate needs and supported the smooth running of the shelter. Donations made in-kind are uniquely valuable in advancing our work. We are tremendously grateful to our In-kind Donors!

As uncertain times continue, we remain optimistic and confident. Providing shelter and services to families, while maintaining safety measures for them and staff, is our top priority. Maintaining financial sustainability is an equally critical component to the work of Belknap House. Our success requires community, teamwork, and generosity.

We are immensely grateful for your support and investment in families.

Events

Our fundraising efforts are a critical component to raising our annual budget.

Some of our annual events include:

- Online Auction, March
- NH Gives, June
- Cow Pie Bingo, July
- Annual Golf Tournament
@ Laconia Country Club, Sept
- Giving Tuesday, November
- Year-end giving campaign, December



To Make A Donation

Help us to meet the needs of homeless families in our area. Not only do we provide a warm bed and safe shelter, but we also assist families with food, provide case management, and classes in nutritional cooking, parenting, budgeting, and resume building.

Your recurring monthly gift offers us financial stability and it allows you to spread the financial impact of your giving across the entire year.

You can make a difference!

\$35 is the cost per day to provide safe shelter for each person

\$25 per month supports a parent with case management

\$50 per month helps meet essential needs for one child

\$50 per month will cover heat for the shelter for one day



Alternatively, a check may be mailed to:

To Donate, go to our website

<https://www.belknaphouse.org/take-action>

Belknap House
200 Court Street
Laconia, NH 03246
[603.527.8097](tel:603.527.8097)

Belknap House
200 Court Street
Laconia, NH 03246

Board of Directors

Don House, President
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Colleen Garrity
Alfred T. Columb
Justin Dockham
Greg Flynn
Bill Giles
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Senior Staff

Paula Ferenc
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