

Homeworkers Organized for More Employment

This Time

Orland, Maine 04472

H.O.M.E. Founder, Sister Lucy Poulin, passes away at 83

On October 14, 2023, H.O.M.E. founder and St. Francis Community leader, Lucy "Sister Lucy" Poulin, passed away at home. She passed as she lived, quietly while making a big impact on her community.

Lucy and other concerned individuals in the Bucksport/Orland area founded H.O.M.E. as a craft cooperative for local low-income people to supplement their earnings. Since 1970, H.O.M.E. has grown into a broad-reaching community development corporation, meeting people's basic needs for shelter, food, healthcare, useful work, and human dignity. Lucy once said, "We began with a dream to offer the poor opportunities to become self-sufficient." She retired in 2016 after 46 years as director. H.O.M.E. continues to advocate for the poor and the disenfranchised, both locally and globally, as part of the Emmaus International Movement.

Lucy had no formal education beyond high school, yet she received honorary degrees for her humanitarian work from the University of Maine, Bowdoin College, University of New England, and Villanova University in Philadelphia. She was given many honors and accolades, but she considered herself a servant of God whose work was to serve others who are suffering. "We help people heal and become who God is calling them to be... We're all on an equal basis... We are one human family," she said.

She was a tireless defender of the poor and the



Above, Lucy and friends at her home in 2023 and below, Lucy with trick or treaters the year she retired.



mistreated. She would hire a person in need of work whether H.O.M.E. had an open position or not. If there was an empty building, she would offer it to a family in need. She always believed God would provide.

Lucy was born July 17, 1940. She grew up in Fairfield, one of eleven children in a Franco-American farm family. To help support her widowed mother and orphaned siblings, she worked in domestic service, poultry processing, a paper mill, and on the family farm, before she joined the Carmelite Sisters in 1957, in New Hampshire; later the Hermitage moved to Bucksport.

Lucy was predeceased by her siblings David, Anthony, James, Lorraine, Joyce, and Lawrence, as well as her companion and life-partner, Ellen (Leslie) Moore. She is survived by her beloved adopted son, Jim Poulin; and by siblings Michael, William, Mary, and Tom; along with many nieces and nephews, among them, Roxanne Poulin and Andrew Philbrick, who both reside at St. Francis Community. Also surviving is her cherished "second family" - Miguel and Gloria TucTuc, their children and grandchildren, now also living at St. Francis.

Near the end, Lucy spoke of Catholic Worker activist, Dorothy Day, who said, "Most days I don't have much. But by little and by little I can steady my wobbles, and put one foot forward. I can try with all my might to live a life of love, by little and by little. It is agreed that Lucy's life was one that was lived with love.

Change in Leadership but not in Programming

H.O.M.E., Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Rosalini Moore to the Executive Director position after Tracey Hair, who served as Executive Director since 2016, left to pursue an opportunity at Maine Community Foundation.

Rosa's first memory of H.O.M.E. was attending the auction as a child. Her mother took her to the craft store and bought her a barrette for her hair with little people made in Guatemala. She states that H.O.M.E. has been a part of her family since her parents moved to the area in 1985.

"H.O.M.E. provided education, childcare, help with resources, fixes for our home, meals and community," says the new director, "We used to go to community supper when our car could make it up the road to the farm." H.O.M.E. added an addition to their one room family home when their family of eight got too big!

"When my mom passed away, I was 22 and H.O.M.E. was there for my little sister with a safe place to live," says Rosa, "And when I adopted my sister and brothers, H.O.M.E. gave me shelter, helped me to get housing and gave me a job and a place in their

supportive community.

Rosa began her career at H.O.M.E. in 2010 as the resident potter. While maintaining her role as resident potter, she also has served as the Learning Center Director, Temp-Daycare Director, and Assistant Director.

Upon Sister Lucy's retirement, she was named Assistant Director in 2016. Rosa was recommended by Tracey Hair herself and H.O.M.E.'s Board approved her appointment in February of this year.

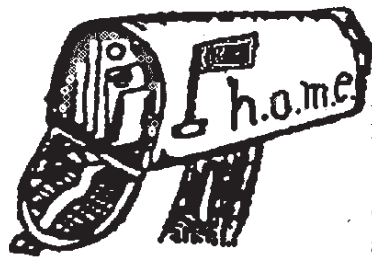
Rosa has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics, General Biology, and Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in Anthropology. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Non-profit Management.

Rosa will be backed in her new role with a management team that includes Shannon Carpenter, Finance Director, Julie Ream, Program Coordinator, and Jade Grindle, Assistant Finance Director. Together, the team completed a smooth transition to their new roles and have kept services running with no interruptions and are dedicated to keep H.O.M.E. thriving for the future.



Management Team 2024
Shannon, Rosa, Jade and Julie

H.O.M.E., Inc. enhances the quality of life of people who have fallen on challenging times by honoring their dignity, attending to such basic needs as food and shelter, supporting their long-term health and development, and fostering a vibrant and mutually supportive community.



Letters

Please send letters to:
This Time
PO Box 10
Orland, ME 04472
admin@homeincme.org

H.O.M.E. wants to hear from you!

Please send your questions, comments, concerns or whatever else might be on your mind to:

H.O.M.E., Inc.
PO Box 10
Orland, ME 04472

Hello friends,

I am an old friend of Betty Olivieri, sister of dear Sr. Marie Ahern. I received your letter this morning and although sad to know we won't have wreaths this year, I do understand the problems inherent in all it takes to accomplish it all. So, going forwards I wish you all well and all God's blessings on all your wonderful work.

With love to you all,
Mary Epifanio

This Time

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Editor: Julie Ream

Visit our web-site for a digital version of this Newsletter in full color!

<http://www.homemmausa.org>

We send our donation in honor of Sister Lucy. God Bless you all in the work you do.

Sincerely,
Kathie & Jack Burnett

Dear Tracey, Julie, and Rosa,

I hope all is well at H.O.M.E. and everyone has a joyous holiday season. I missed being able to come to H.O.M.E. this past summer with our group from St. Luke's. My older son was married that weekend! I do hope to be able to see everyone again this coming summer. Please give my best to all.

God bless,
Elaine Salvadore

**Dear Elaine,

Thank you for your well wishes and congratulations to your son!

H.O.M.E. Team

H.O.M.E., Inc.

Board of Directors

Mike Guare, Chair, Bangor
Susan Lessard, Treasurer, Bucksport
Tammie Cox, Secretary, Sedgwick
Karen Botta, Staff Representative, E. Orland
William O'Donnell, Bucksport
Denise Keene, Verona Island
Dennis Foley, Orland
Christine Witham, Bar Harbor
Debbie Murray, Brewer

Hi Friends at H.O.M.E., especially you at the Bargain Barn,

Hope the cold weather hasn't moved in too seriously in Orland yet, and the Bargain Barn isn't overrun for warm stuff.

Wish these boxes were larger but this is the biggest I can handle getting to the post office. Meanwhile, have a wonderful Thanksgiving in as many ways as possible.

May you all be blessed in your work, as ever,
Claire Kaiser

H.O.M.E., Inc. Spring Appeal 2024



"Serve First Those Who Suffer Most"

H.O.M.E. is a place where you can come and it is easier to be good because human values are the ones that are the bottom line. ~ Lucy Poulin

Dear Friends of H.O.M.E.,

Last night the police called looking for help for a young man unsheltered through the early April snowstorm. Our doors were open, as they always are, even on the harshest of nights. We are thankful that spring has come. Winter has been challenging. Throughout these difficult months, our community has faced unprecedented hardships, loss and change. Amidst it all, our commitment to our community never wavers, but the reality is that our efforts are only possible with your support.

During one of my last visits with H.O.M.E.'s founder, Sister Lucy Poulin, as her life was gently dimming, she imparted one last lesson. I sat by Lucy's bedside with her niece, Roxanne. Each of us held a hand as we talked. Lucy drifted in and out of sleep and wakefulness. In the background faint discussion could be heard regarding critical building repairs. Lucy no longer needed to worry. She could rest now.

For a brief moment she woke and reached into her denim shirt pocket. With frail hands, she pressed her palm into mine, whispering, "take this for the repairs." I looked down to see my hand was empty yet my heart was full. I'll never be sure what Lucy imagined she had given me, but I was overwhelmingly touched by her spirit. Lucy spent her life giving to others, and in her final days, her concern was still for how she might give more. She was a humble hero for so many. I am thankful for the moments I have been blessed to spend with her.

I am also thankful to Tracey Hair, my mentor and friend, who has moved on to a new venture at Maine Community Foundation. I am so fortunate to have learned from her. I have worked hand-in-hand with Tracey for many difficult years, some of the hardest of my life. Our H.O.M.E. as it is today has been fortunate to have grown through the direction of Tracey and Lucy. Their strong, compassionate leadership has helped to transform and uplift so many lives.

Now, I ask you to consider what you can give? Every donation, no matter its size, brings immediate and crucial flexibility to our operations. This flexibility is vital—it means we are able to meet people where they are when they find themselves out in the cold at our door. This type of funding is powerful—it allows us to tailor our response to the need and, at times, prevents homelessness altogether.

This tailored response is transformational—it allows for us to be human.

Living in the shelter can be hard. Sometimes friends are made. Sometimes it is difficult to get along. Everyone has their own separate journey but for a moment we are all together here at H.O.M.E. We have the opportunity to connect and build community. For many, like myself who found themselves unsheltered, H.O.M.E. has provided not just shelter but long-term stability and a sense of belonging.

Homelessness is increasing in our area. In 2023, H.O.M.E. provided 15,863 bed nights through our shelter programming—a staggering 182% increase since 2021. H.O.M.E.'s programs not only provide shelter but also promote long-term health and development through creative arts and community programs, fostering a vibrant, supportive environment that, as Lucy put it, ensures "human values are the ones that form our bottom line."

However, we now stand at a critical juncture. With the end of Covid relief funds homeless shelter providers across the state are struggling to keep their doors open. The cost of running our programs has increased, yet support from federal and state resources remains stagnant, creating significant financial gaps.

Please, make a donation today. Consider becoming a sustaining supporter. Your gift is crucial. Even if it feels like there is nothing left to give, there is always a way. I have witnessed it. Help us ensure that H.O.M.E. remains a cornerstone of hope in our community.

With heartfelt thanks,

Rosalani Moore
Executive Director



Excerpts from 2022 Community Impact

Board of Director's Report

Dear Friends,

The past year we suffered some losses, but it was also a year in which there were many occasions for celebration.

As you all know, last year we lost our beloved founder and board member emeritus, Lucy Poulin, who passed away on October 14, 2023. This wonderful organization and all the work H.O.M.E. does will be a legacy to Lucy's memory for many years to come. Our Board is committed to ensuring that H.O.M.E.'s work continues to be as vital and meaningful as it was when Lucy was with us.

In 2023, we also mourned the loss of Dr. Stephen York, who was Vice Chair of our Board and Pastor of the Elm Street Congregational Church in Bucksport. Dr. York passed away on August 13th. His service to the Board was exemplary and we will all miss him.

We celebrated the addition of two new Board members: Debbie Murray and Christine Witham both of whom were voted in at our 2023 Annual Meeting. Debbie works as a manager for Hannaford Brothers and is very active with in-store and community events. Christine is a Hotelier and a partner in her family's business and has an overwhelming concern over ongoing issues of

homelessness, mental health, and helping people receive healthy meals. We welcome both of them to the Board and look forward to their contributions.

One item that needs to be addressed, although not a 2023 event, is that long-time H.O.M.E. employee and Executive Director since 2016, Tracey Hair, resigned from her position for another opportunity in January of 2024. She served H.O.M.E. well during the difficult transition of Lucy's retirement and built a strong team to carry on the work now that she has moved on. H.O.M.E.'s Board and staff are sorry to see her go but wish her the best in her new endeavors.

Upon Tracey's resignation, she recommended that the Board name H.O.M.E. Assistant Director, Rosalani Moore, as the new Executive Director. Rosa will head up a Management Team consisting of H.O.M.E. Finance Director, Shannon Carpenter, Program Coordinator, Julie Ream, and Finance Administrator, Jade Grindle. The Board has confidence that the Management Team will be able to carry on programming with as little interruption of services as possible.

One of the biggest reasons for celebration which we had on the Board this last year was seeing once again how strong and resilient H.O.M.E. is...despite the losses of Lucy Poulin and Dr. York. The staff

changes which Rosa describes in her report, the many crises {including some very serious ones} which happen almost constantly when doing the work which H.O.M.E. does, the organization has not only survived, but has actually thrived. Our basic programs are still going strong. The financial stability of the organization continues to improve and has, in fact, reached a level of stability which gives us great confidence for the future. The extensive repairs and renovations to our buildings and other physical facilities has continued. And perhaps most importantly, we continue to have a marvelous and committed staff which makes all of this possible.

Thus, despite losses and difficulties, H.O.M.E. is strong, is staffed by wonderful people and continues to do great work. We on the Board are proud to be part of it and we look forward to supporting H.O.M.E. and its' work as we move into the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Guare, Esq.
Board Chair

Director's Report

Dear Friends,

Resiliency in the face of change...

2023 confronted H.O.M.E. with the opportunity to face loss with open hearts, hands held in strength and solidarity. Together we commemorated the passing of our founder, our fearless leader, Sr. Lucy Poulin. It was a peaceful ceremony surrounded by family and friends all gathered in the woods to say farewell.

A few years ago, I sat with Lucy on her back porch. She rocked in her seat and spoke to me of the fall, her favorite season, for her a season of change before the dormancy of winter and rebirth of spring. We watched orange leaves falling from barren branches and listened



to the wind in the trees. Neither Lucy nor I were ever very chatty.

The ceremony was beautiful and somehow right to view Sister Lucy, covered in dahlias, given back to earth as the leaves drifted to the forest floor among her family and friends. I was honored to be there. This vivid moment, I will never forget.

For H.O.M.E. our annual report, is a chance to look back on the year and celebrate our work in order to prepare ourselves again for the fight ahead. This is an opportunity to express our gratitude to H.O.M.E.'s guests, staff, patrons, volunteers, donors, partners, and friends who make up this incredible community. It is also an opportunity to remember and give thanks to those who have come to H.O.M.E. over the years.

H.O.M.E. also lost two board members in 2023. Honorary board member, Helen Stummer, passed away in July. Helen's photographs of those at H.O.M.E. are still seen along our office halls and in our archives. In August,

we lost our Board Vice-Chair Reverend Dr. Stephen L. York. Dr. York was a cherished friend, an unforgettable soul and passionate supporter of H.O.M.E.'s work. We are blessed to have been touched by their lives. Through each set back, through each loss, we carry on. We continue our struggle navigating change, loss and pain savoring small moments of tranquility and happiness. Our Housing Navigators work tirelessly to house those who come to our doors in need. Many come with nothing to their names and through the staff at H.O.M.E. are connected with a new home after entering our programs. In 2023, H.O.M.E. sheltered 222 guests in our emergency shelter spaces and exited 49 households into permanent housing. H.O.M.E. provided 15,863 bed nights through our shelter programming. This work is done with compassion in our hearts in the face of difficult stories and challenging moments, In times of crisis and turmoil things can come out sideways. I am ever impressed by our staff who meet these challenges with acceptance and perseverance towards our goal of housing first.

Maine is at a turning point. With the end of Covid relief funds homeless shelter providers across the state are struggling to keep their doors open and remain financially stable. The cost of running our programs has increased yet federal and state funding support for these programs has not, leaving budgetary gaps that are hard to meet with private donor support alone. H.O.M.E. is more than shelter, it is a community resource hub for our area.

Diversion services intended to help prevent homelessness in the first place through preventative measure. In 2023, 83 individuals were diverted from homelessness. Our food pantries provided 316 food boxes that fed 1,971 individuals and rescued 304,918 pounds of food for distribution to those facing food insecurity. In Maine, 1 in 7 children experience food insecurity. In addition to our food pantry work, our affordable daycare program provided care for 30 children which includes two healthy meals and snacks throughout the day. These programs, among others H.O.M.E. provides, help to increase stability for working families and promote the resiliency and health of our children and whole families.

When we are weary from the work, we are uplifted by the many moments of happiness and beauty received through giving back to others.

Not only did 2023 mark the passing of Sister Lucy, H.O.M.E. began a transition in executive leadership. Since Lucy's retirement in 2016, Tracey Hair has been a transformational leader for H.O.M.E., a catalyst for change and a fierce advocate for those suffering from housing insecurity. At the end of the year, Tracey announced her intention to move on to a bright future at Maine Community Foundation. While H.O.M.E. misses Tracey's quick thinking and decisive leadership, we know Tracey has found a broader foundation through which to do good and to give to others. H.O.M.E. has been fortunate to have grown through the leadership of Lucy and Tracey, two incredible women, both strong, brave, and compassionate leaders determined to change the world for and with those less fortunate.

Our new management team is honored to have the opportunity to carry on their legacy. As a team Julie Ream, Jade Grindle, Shannon Carpenter, and myself will strive to continue the work of H.O.M.E. by serving first those who suffer most. We will remain, as Tracey said, "steadfast in our commitment to providing services with compassion, wisdom, and understanding in partnership with people who need our help developing a path to independence."

Kind Regards,

Rosalani Moore
Executive Director



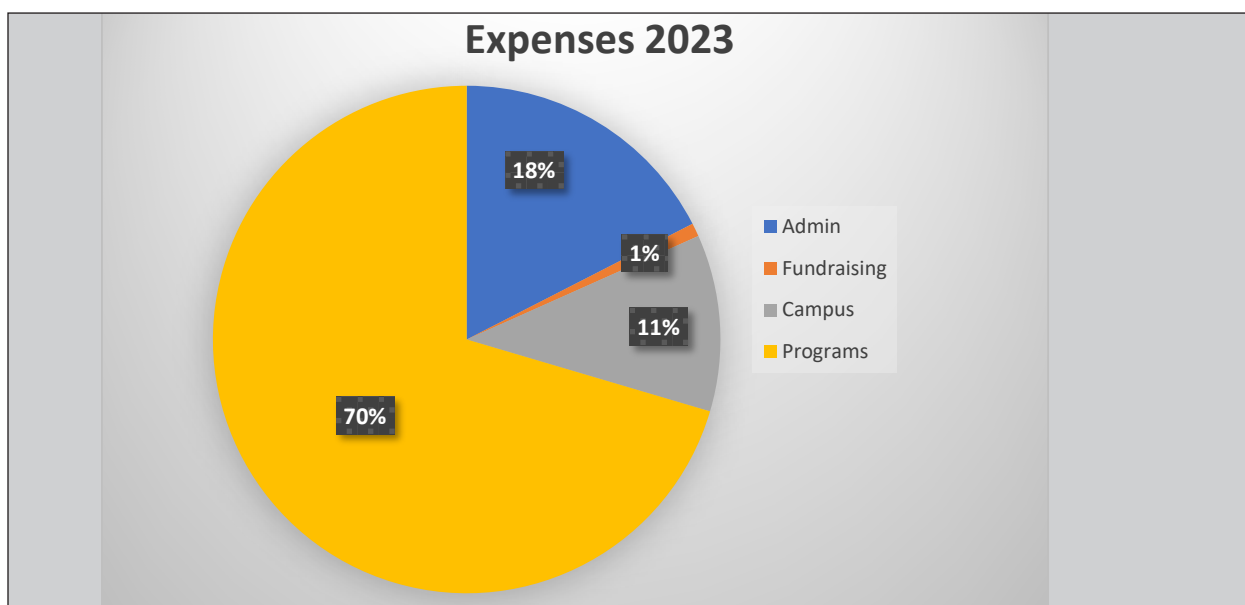
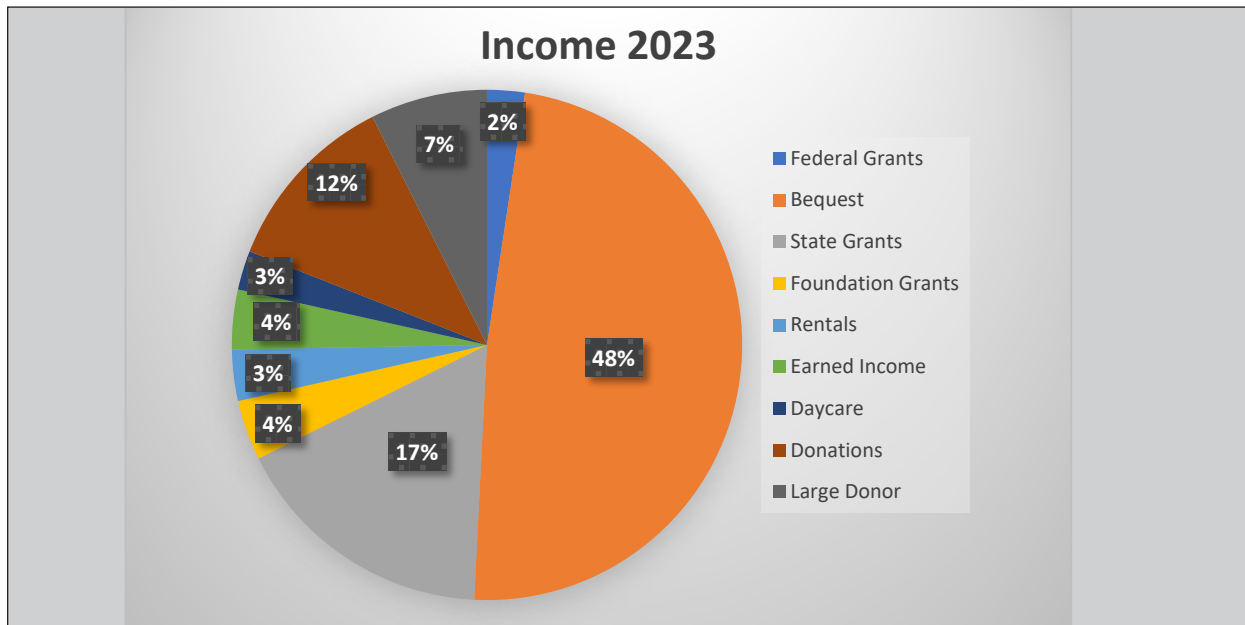
Rosa and Activities Coordinator, Jackie Perkins at Empty Bowls 2023

Finance 2023

H.O.M.E.'s Finance Department experienced a change of leadership with the Departure of long-time Finance Director, Mary Mahan. Assistant Finance Director, Shannon Carpenter, stepped up to the director position and administrative assistant, Jade Grindle, has taken over the Assistant Finance Director position. The transition went smoothly with no interruptions in the finance department.

In 2023, H.O.M.E. again had a successful audit, received One-Time Shelter Funding as well as Diversion and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) monies. They also oversaw a change in health insurance companies and assisted the board with revising the sick and vacation policies.

Lastly, the Hardship Fund, an emergency assistance fund endowed by supporter donations was able to help with oil deliveries, temporary hotel stays and gas gift cards. Over \$4000 was distributed to folks in our community in need thanks to YOU!



Volunteers

H.O.M.E.'s 2023 Volunteer Season saw a substantial amount of work being completed on campus. As always, H.O.M.E.'s volunteers went above and beyond with the work they did, the materials they donated, and the cash donations they left behind.

The few projects that were not completed in 2022 were finished off by 2023's crews. Included in those projects were the completion of the deck on the side of the Market Stand, new bathroom and kitchen items donated to be used in the volunteer center and the installation of the range hood for the soup kitchen (which was done by professionals, not volunteers). The last of the shingles on the Market Stand were applied to the outside. The fence along the highway also saw some more love from our volunteers as missing boards were replaced and other repairs and painting were done as well.

Over 895 hours of time were donated in 2023. The most exciting part of those numbers is that we are seeing an uptick in community members wanting to volunteer on a regular basis. Involving the community more has been a goal of H.O.M.E.'s Volunteer Program for many years and we are excited to see more people wanting to be involved. Even more exciting is the uptick includes young people who would like to help.

All the amazing work done by our volunteers is wonderful and on top of that, they usually leave behind items that H.O.M.E. can use such shelves for

the volunteer center storage. One group purchased and assembled a picnic table to replace one on campus that was beyond repair. All this on top of the fact that most groups purchased all the materials they needed for their projects. Altogether, volunteers donated over 895 hours of their time and purchased \$12,000 in materials.

H.O.M.E.'s attention to its campus with the assistance of our amazing volunteers is paying off with the community noticing how nice our little village is looking which, in turn, is bringing more interest to assist H.O.M.E. with it's mission.



Volunteer Projects completed in 2023...

- Scraped and painted the old pottery building
- Gutters installed on Learning Center front and back porches, the Craft Store, the front of the Living Arts Studio and Pottery buildings.
- Stained the bridge, Learning Center and Gift Shop porches
- Replaced roof on the large shed
- Painted a mural on the wall in the daycare play yard
- Refreshed signs around campus with new paint
- Assisted with switching around of water heaters
- Installed skirting on craft store
- Replaced windows in Living Arts Studio and Volunteer Center
- Built a gazebo for shade and shelter outside the campus shelters
- Laid flooring in the stitchery back room
- Replaced the doors for the Director and Resource Room
- Stacked firewood



Above, volunteers scraping old paint in preparation for the mural pictured below, Left, two summer volunteers measure and cut metal for a shed roof they're helping to put on.



Shelter

This past year has seen many changes for the shelter department including additional staff and programs. We reorganized the shelters to better accommodate the many different family structures that present themselves at our doors.

St. Francis Inn is now our shelter for men and childless couples, the Dorr House serves women and Sr. Marie House is our family shelter. H.O.M.E. now has the ability to serve same sex families, single dads, couples with children and couples without.

Karen Botta was promoted to Co-Manager of the shelter department along side Elizabeth Franck and Amy Smith stepped up to Primary Housing Navigator. In spite of the declining housing market, we have been consistently housing shelter guests. This past year we have successfully housed 8 families and 25 individuals. The average length of stay last year across all shelters was 71.5 days

H.O.M.E. has been participating in a new pilot program for the statewide coordinated entry that created 9 Hubs within the state of Maine. The hubs will work to collect real-time, by-name data of those experiencing homelessness. From there, the Hub command centers will use the data to make the strategic investments needed to reduce homelessness. H.O.M.E. joins Hub 8 for weekly provider resource meetings in Washington and Hancock counties.

Our shelters are now fully staffed providing 24 hour coverage during the week with second shift and

overnights on the weekends as well. Second shifts aides, Valerie and Robin have been cooking monthly meals with each shelter as well as baking cookies with the guests during the holiday season. They also provide transportation 3 days a week (a day for each shelter) for guests to go to the local grocery store and other shops as needed.



Above, Housing Navigator, Amy Smith, celebrating with former shelter guest, Patrick, upon receiving the keys to his new apartment. Below, Jennifer shows off her new house keys.



15,863 Bed Nights provided - 222 guests were sheltered.

Diversion/ Homeless Family Outreach

H.O.M.E. began offering Diversion Services in 2022. Diversion is set up to stop homelessness before it happens. If a family or individual is in danger of being evicted with the possibility of becoming homeless, they call our Diversion Specialist to help navigate what issues or situations are causing the potential eviction and help the family or individual resolve the issue(s). This could mean helping to pay their rent, or buying a new boiler for a family facing freezing in their home.

In 2023, H.O.M.E. was able to offer financial assistance and case management to 36 households which totaled 83 individuals. 45 other households that we were not able to assist were given referrals to other services that may be able to help. Often with referrals, the Diversion Specialist may make phone calls for the folks they are trying to help.

36 families/individuals moved into permanent housing.

Daycare

H.O.M.E., Inc. Daycare showed an increase in enrollment in 2023. There were 30 children enrolled for the year. We provide full-time, part-time, drop-in care and after school care. There were some highlights for Daycare in 2023. We were awarded a grant that allowed us to purchase new outside toys for our playground. We purchased a new swing, games and other toys for outside play. The children greatly enjoyed these items. The Hatch Fund awarded a grant to daycare allowing us to send six children to the YMCA Young Bucks Day Camp for five weeks. This was a wonderful experience for the children. They had so many memorable experiences and made lots of friends. We are excited to hopefully provide this experience again for 2024.

Joan and Karl Austin are key members of Trinity Episcopal Church in Castine and raised over \$2,000 from their church family for the daycare to purchase Christmas gifts. This generosity allowed us to purchase Christmas gifts for all our enrolled children, their siblings, and children who are guests of our shelters. Santa came to deliver the presents and it was an amazing experience to witness. We are extremely grateful to Joan, Karl, and the Trinity Episcopal Church families for their unending support to our daycare. They are always ready and willing to support us in any way we need.

I also want to give a HUGE THANK YOU to our Daycare Staff. We have an amazing, loving, and dedicated group who are committed to providing the best quality of care to our children. Thank you to past

and present employees of 2023: Denise, Janet, Chloe, Cade, Jen, Petra, and our newest member Lex.



Above, children at dance play. Below, Daycare children pausing from play for a photo op.



**30 unduplicated enrollments
1 in-house subsidy provided.**

Housing

H.O.M.E.'s Housing Program has taken a step towards making it self-sufficient. Hospitality House in Bucksport is home to 7 one-bedroom apartments that are for people experiencing homelessness and/or who qualify as low-income. Over the last few years, much work has gone into updating the apartments at Hospitality House with the hopes that they will pass inspection for housing vouchers.

Hospitality House began as a shelter called Dorothy Hance House after the late Sister Barbara Hance's mother. It allowed for families to stay together while searching for permanent housing or moving on to H.O.M.E.'s Transitional Housing while working on getting the financials together to purchase a H.O.M.E.-built home.

In 2016, the few apartments still being used as shelter beds were transitioned into rental properties. H.O.M.E. subsidized the apartments at 30% of the tenant's income. Unfortunately, due to the rising costs of utilities, the subsidy was not sustainable. In 2023, H.O.M.E. ended the subsidizing of the apartments while keeping the rent at an affordable rate. This decision affected two tenants although it only affected one seriously. H.O.M.E. is working with that tenant in regards to what would be best for them.

The great news is that after all the hard work of grant writing and hiring contractors to get all the renovations to Hospitality House completed, the apartments are now up to the standards of the Housing Voucher inspections and two new people left the shelter to rent their apartment with a Maine Housing Voucher.

The future of H.O.M.E.'s housing program looks to add new buildings for family housing right here on campus. The lack of affordable housing, especially for those families who are chronically homeless, has spurred H.O.M.E.'s programming to do what it has always done, adapt to the needs of our community members and become what they need. H.O.M.E. will continue to do just that.

Food Pantry

H.O.M.E.'s food pantries in Orland and Ellsworth were able to give out 1,078 food boxes serving almost 2,000 individuals in Hancock County. This increase included over 88 new families seeking assistance. For the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday boxes, 316 boxes were given out to feed 1,027 individuals.

The produce lines at both pantries combined prevented 304,918 pounds of food from ending up in a landfill. The produce line is a food rescue program that safely recovers excess food from local supermarkets and distributes it to people in need. A local Bucksport woman who is a single mother of two stated that she uses the produce line when her budget is stretched too thin. "Sometimes it comes down to wondering do I buy groceries or pay the electric bill." Knowing that she will be able to get food from the produce line when she needs it makes the decision easier.

Exciting for H.O.M.E.'s soup kitchen is that the last piece of equipment has been purchased and installed. The range hood for the kitchen was purchased and installed with a grant award to H.O.M.E. by the Solidarity Fund. The Annual Solidarity Program is the key mechanism for sharing and solidarity with the Emmaus movement. Every year, the groups worldwide contribute to a 'common pot' of solidarity through voluntary

contributions, often the proceeds of special sales days or regional and national fairs. In this way, everyone participates in international solidarity according to their means so that groups across the globe have the resources required to lead their struggles.

Emmaus International member groups, of which H.O.M.E. is one, who wish to bolster their capacity to act and develop their activities, can then apply for financial support from the annual solidarity program. The rest of the appliances for the soup kitchen were purchased thanks to the Abbe Pierre Fund through Emmaus International. The installation of the range hood was the last piece needed for the soup kitchen to re-open in February 2024.

POVERTY IS A COMPLICATED ISSUE, BUT FEEDING A CHILD ISN'T.
-JEFF BRIDGES

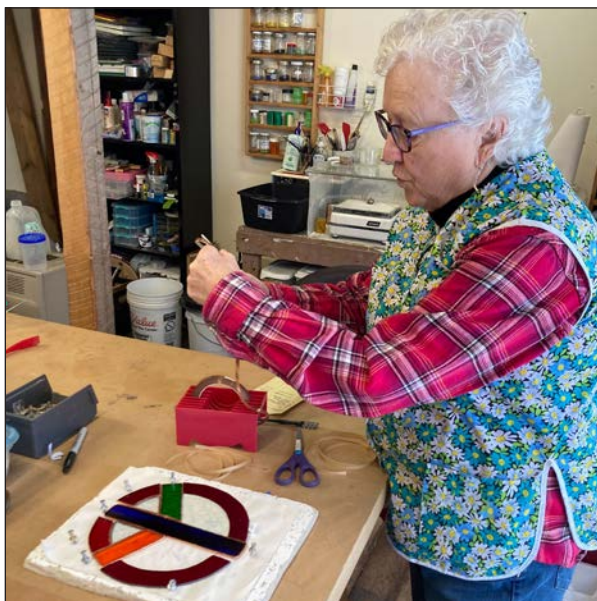
Crafts

In May 2023 H.O.M.E. held the grand re-opening and re-branding of our Craft Store. Now known as the H.O.M.E.-Made Gift Shop we opened the doors with a fresh new look and a new gift shop manager, Leslie who comes to us with a multitude of skills and experience. We started out with a bang, hosting our annual "Pathways to Creativity" event. The studios were open with demonstrations by our talented artisans and volunteers in pottery, stained glass, living arts and stitchery. The studios offer weekly classes that are open to the public. The public classes and workshops provide some of the funds that support the studios ability to teach weekly classes offered free to our shelter guests. This facilitates the opportunity for our guests to learn a new skill while fostering a creative outlet during their stay at H.O.M.E. They can sell their creations at our gift shop and receive 100% of the proceeds. Local crafters also have the opportunity to sell their work in our shop and volunteer with us in the store and at craft shows.

In August, H.O.M.E. was please to host our annual "Empty Bowls Fundraiser" featuring soup bowls created by H.O.M.E. potters. Empty Bowls is a grass root movement by artists and crafts people in cities and towns around the world to raise money to care for and feed the hungry in their communities. Our potters shaped and glazed over 200 bowls in the clay studio for this event that was held at the Market Stand at H.O.M.E.

We shared in many local happenings throughout the year where we could educate our community about what we do here at H.O.M.E. while selling items from the gift shop. Bucksport Pride Festival, Bucksport Bay Festival, Orland River Days and the Orland Community

Center Holiday Fair were some of the many events we joined in the Bucksport/Orland communities. We also traveled to craft fairs outside of Maine and brought our fun, functional and folksy Maine made art to several New England communities while also communicating our mission to serve first those who suffer most.



Whether it be a small mosaics class, Left or larger, above, the stained glass studio is prepared for all students. Below, a pottery student shows off her newly made mugs.



Food boxes distributed to 1971 individuals.



Turkeys being loaded in the H.O.M.E. van to be brought back for holiday food box distribution.

22.5 cords of firewood distributed for heat assistance.

Wood Bank

The Wood Bank continues to make a difference in the lives of many Hancock County residents. In 2023, H.O.M.E. distributed 22.5 cord of wood to folks in our area who were in danger of running out of fuel before their fuel assistance appointment.

Wood banks are becoming more popular in the State of Maine. H.O.M.E. staff were able to meet with folks from other areas in Maine interested in starting wood banks in their own communities and were looking for helpful information and tips for how a wood bank can run. H.O.M.E. is always happy to help an to collaborate when needed.

The wood bank is run by H.O.M.E. Sawyer, Clint Clagget with assistance from various volunteer groups throughout the year that help split and stack the wood for the next winter season.

H.O.M.E. is dedicated to help as many folks through the cold winter months as possible and work is being done to increase capacity for this program.



Volunteers from Saint Anselm College stack firewood for the 2023 heating season.

Faces of H.O.M.E.



H.O.M.E. Inc.
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"Serve First Those Who Suffer Most" Homeworkers Organized for More Employment



Goodbye to one friend and see you later to another. Tracey Hair and Sister Lucy at H.O.M.E.'s Annual Dinner 2015.



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