

H.O.M.E., Inc. 2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



H.O.M.E. MANAGEMENT TEAM 2024

H.O.M.E., Inc.
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BOARD MEMBERS

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

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 Interim 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



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2.

Resiliency in the face of change...

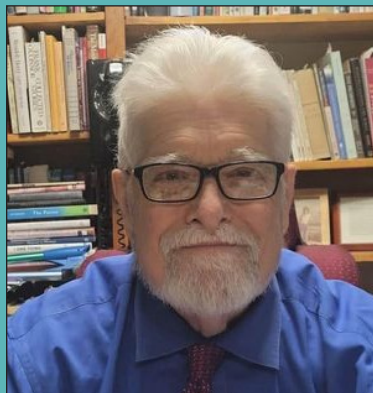
Dear Friends,

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 76 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



DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONT

for these programs has not thus 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. In 2023, 83 individuals were diverted from homelessness. Our food pantries provided 762 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



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.



FINANCE/HOUSING

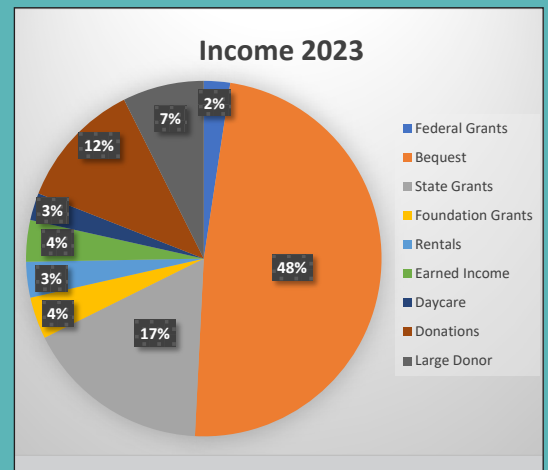
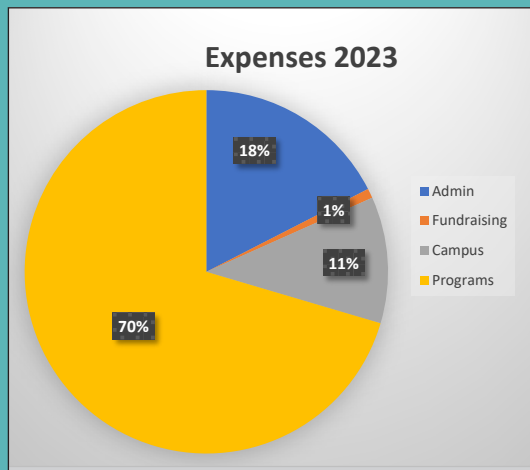
19 households housed in H.O.M.E.'s rental units.

FINANCE

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!



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 renovating the apartments at Hospitality House with the hopes that they will pass the stricter inspection requirements for housing vouchers.

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. This decision affected 2 tenants although it only affected 1 seriously. H.O.M.E. is working with that tenant in regards to what would be best for them.

H.O.M.E. is now working on a capital campaign to help raise funds for newly constructed housing here on the H.O.M.E. campus. This large project has already seen an influx of funds thanks to the Bezos Day One Family Fund that H.O.M.E. was awarded in 2022. A portion of those funds went to the Diversion/Family Homeless Outreach Program to assist and divert families from entering shelter. The remainder of the fund will go towards the capital campaign to help us build five new apartments for low-income families.

The facilities committee continues to meet to determine any other work that may be needed on H.O.M.E.'s buildings and grounds. Whether due to project based grant writing that brought in funds to hire contractors or our volunteer workforce in the summer months, work on H.O.M.E.'s buildings is rarely dipping into general operational funds.

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. Maggie Fairbrother will assist Amy with Navigating. 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 are 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.



DIVERSION/FAMILY HOMELESS 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 folks in recognition that trying to keep your family from becoming homeless or get them out of homelessness can be an overwhelming and tiring process.

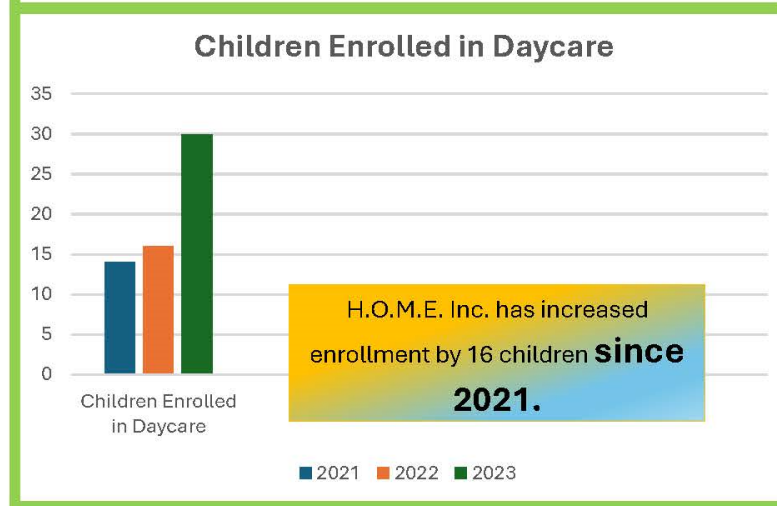
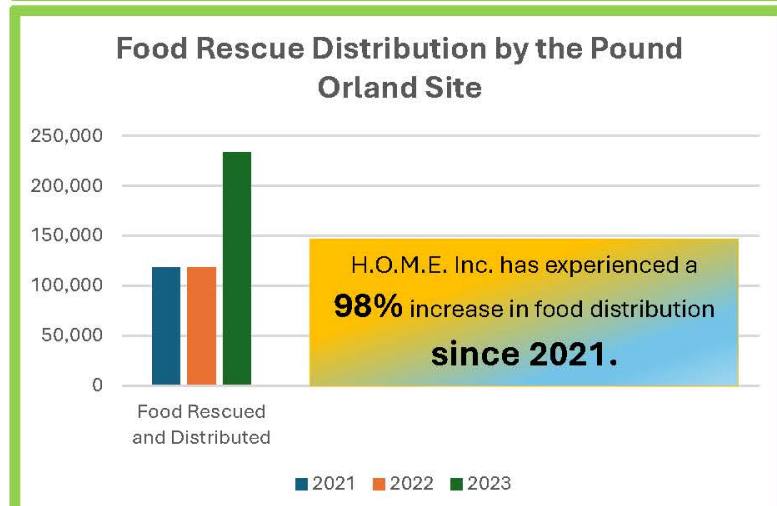
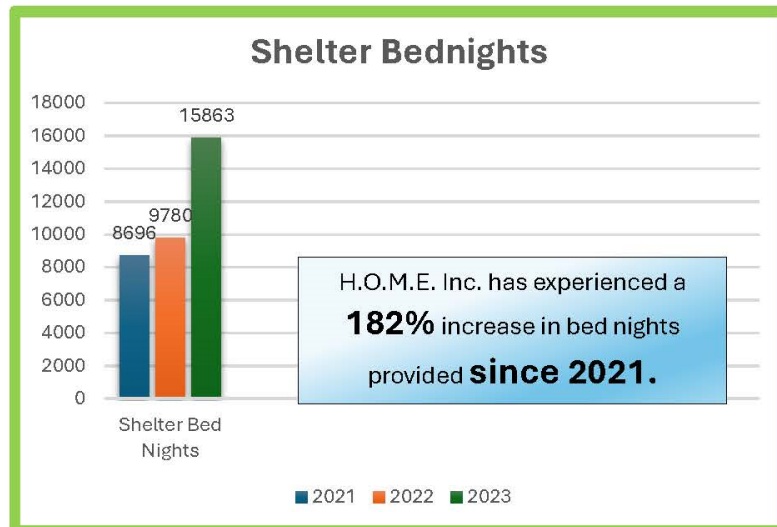
SHELTER

**15,863 Bed
Nights
provided -
221 guests
were
sheltered.**



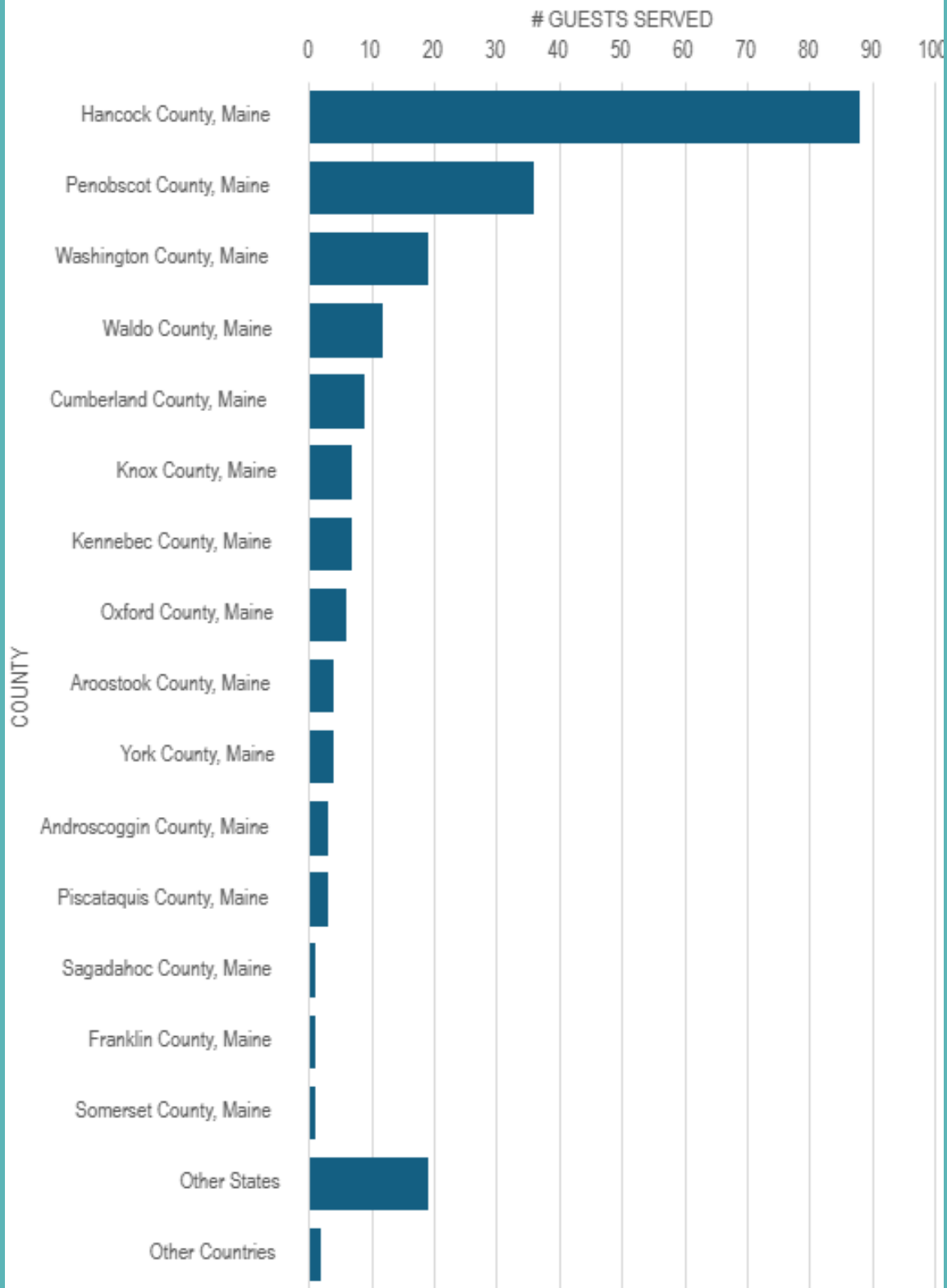
HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAM INCREASES FOR 2023





Geographic Areas Served in 2023



HIGHLIGHTS



DAYCARE

30 individual enrollments
3 subsidies provided

8.

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 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.



FOOD PANTRY/SOUP KITCHEN

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

The produce lines at both pantries combined saved 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.



GARDENS

H.O.M.E.'s Garden Manager, Tyler Baker, along with Millie and Ralph had a great season participating in the Bucksport's Farmers' Market during the summer of 2023. Their assortment of fresh veggies, healthy plantings, jams, baked goods, and local crafts from the H.O.M.E.-Made Gift Shop contributed to the variety of products offered at the market each week.

Tyler is working on getting H.O.M.E.'s three greenhouses to be as productive as possible throughout the year, not only in the summer. H.O.M.E. is excited for the coming years as Tyler's plans to use more local volunteer gardeners to help him maintain the greenhouse's plantings as well as H.O.M.E.'s two large gardens. If you are interested in being a volunteer in the gardens, give Tyler a call.



FOOD PANTRY/GARDENS

304,918 lbs.
of food
rescued and
distributed
at the daily
produce line



CRAFTS/WOOD BANK

22.5 cord of wood were given to families in need

10.

CRAFTS/ACTIVITIES

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 artists also have the opportunity to sell their work in our shop and volunteer with us in the store and at craft shows.

Guests of our shelters accessed our craft programming 178 times. Community members attended classes 107 times.

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 craftspeople 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.



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 and 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.



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 2023s 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 as shelving in the volunteer center. 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.

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.

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
- Installed new outdoor lighting

H.O.M.E., Inc. At-A-Glance 2024

Shelter and Housing

Guests provided with emergency shelter **222**

Households provided with hotel rooms **18**

Individuals diverted from homelessness **83**

Households housed in H.O.M.E.'s units **20**

Average number of days in shelter **63**

Bed nights provided **15,863**

Food and Resources

Individuals provided with food boxes **1971**

Daycare enrollments **30**

Holiday food boxes provided **316**

Children received Christmas presents **390**

Children provided with backpacks and school supplies **63**

Cord of firewood distributed **22.5**

Individuals provided basic needs supplies **1042**

Pounds of food rescued **304,918**

LOCAL STATISTICS

1 in 10 adults and 1 in 7 children experience food insecurity yearly.

Maine ranks 3rd in the U.S. as most expensive place to buy groceries.

4 in 10 food-insecure households in Maine Do Not Income-Qualify for SNAP benefits.

70.4% of households in our area are not able to afford median rent.

Supporters...



Thank
you
for
all
your
support!



DONORS



Helen & George Ladd Charitable Corporation





**H.O.M.E., INC. ENVISIONS A WORLD
WHERE HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY ARE
UNDERSTOOD, ALLEVIATED, AND PREVENTED.**
