



Food Bank
Social Services

Helpline House 2020 Annual Report

Supporting Neighbors During the COVID - 19 Response

What a year. In the first two months of 2020, it became evident that this year was going to be unlike any we've experienced before. Helpline House, like so many other organizations, spent the year making difficult decisions in balancing the health and safety of clients, staff, volunteers, and the community, with fulfilling our mission and providing our services, all of which were communal and congregational.

In retrospect, Helpline House's year can be described by our three C's: Courage, Collaboration, and Community



193 first-time families

were helped by Bainbridge Island community's generosity in April through December.



We connected with Island Volunteer Caregivers to deliver nutritious groceries to anyone unable to come to the food bank.

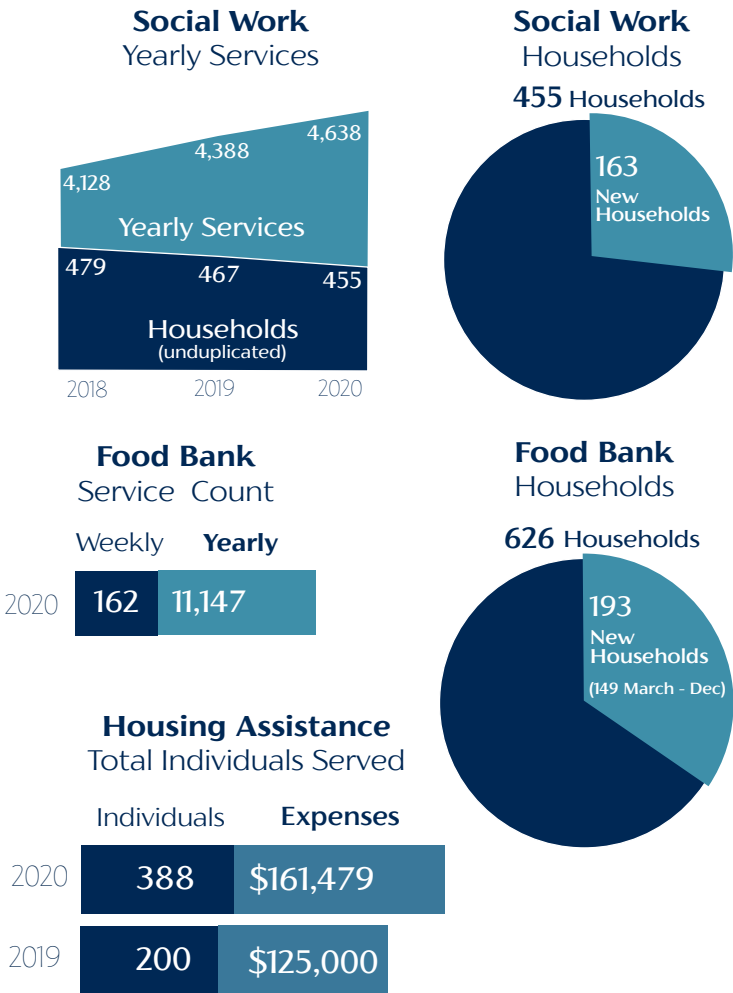


Courage: In light of the public health recommendations, Helpline House made the courageous and difficult decision to pivot from in-person service provision to remote service provision. For the food bank, that meant a 1 day turn around from a market shopping model to curbside distribution. **Shoppers could simply drive up and have their food placed in their trunk, socially distanced and contact free.** Over the months, we continued to refine our process on the curb. We added as much choice as we could, by placing many offerings on display and asking every single shopper individual preferences for dairy and meat, every time. We saw our intrepid volunteers hand out food in the elements – rain, hail, wind – and accordingly, made some improvements to the infrastructure supporting the food distribution.

We quickly decided to expand a program that was typically only during school breaks – Kids' Pantry. Because kids were not attending in person school and didn't have access to meals there, Helpline House mobilized and organized Kids' Pantry bags to be offered with food distribution for all households with children in the household. As students didn't return to the

classroom in 2020, we didn't stop our Kids' Pantry program all year. **We distributed 3,178 Kids' Pantry bags over 41 weeks, triple the amount from the prior year.** Our social work services similarly had to rethink what service provision looked like. While staff was very nervous about telehealth services, they quickly understood the best path forward was to offer phone and remote appointments. The first week after the switch was a learning process, but many clients canceled appointments or rescheduled for a much later date. The following week folks came surging back and we saw our highest numbers in April, as clients were beginning to see the financial and mental health effects of lockdown, lost wages, and uncertainty in the months ahead. **We offered over 500 social work services in April; all in all offering a record 4,638 social work services in 2020.**

Helpline House, in collaboration with the City of Bainbridge Island and community donors, increased the amount of financial support offered to our neighbors for housing and utility assistance.



In 2020, we assisted over 100 more of our neighbors with their housing expenses than in 2019, in a year when many saw incomes plummet or drastically decrease due to the pandemic.

We couldn't speak about the courage of 2020 without mentioning the hundreds of Islanders who who came to Helpline House for the first time. **Social work saw 163 households (36% of the total households) for the first time last year, while the food bank saw 193 new households (31% of total households).** Many Islanders found themselves in unexpected circumstances when their small businesses were forced to close or their restaurant hours were cut by half or more.

Collaboration: All of the work accomplished this year would not have been possible without collaboration with the City of Bainbridge Island and other non-profits. The City provided funding to Helpline House in response to those facing housing insecurity, and further provided communication around changing health and safety best practices. The Bainbridge Artisan Resource Network (BARN) saw the loss of safe and reliable places for more vulnerable folks to access food and began making prepared meals to be distributed through Helpline House and Island Volunteer Caregivers (IVC). IVC, in turn, partnered with Helpline House to get food to those Islanders who for medical, health, and safety reasons, couldn't come to Helpline House to access the food pantry. IVC has volunteers on a daily basis who pick up a week's worth of Helpline House groceries and deliver it all around in our community.



Over 70 prepared meals, weekly,

including vegetarian options were given to Helpline House to pass directly to island households at the curbside food bank between October and December.



388 neighbors

were able to stay in their homes with help from the Housing & Utility Assistance Program.

Staff

Leadership

Maria Metzler, MAPC
Executive Director

Myra Howrey
Business Manager

Debbie Stearns
Communications Manager

Gina Kapel, MSW, LICSW
Therapist

Erika Dorsey, MA, LMHC
Therapist

Tana Berry, BASW
Case Manager

Marilyn Gremse, BA
Case Manager

Megan Markley, BSW
Case Manager

Paige Pereira, BSW
Case Manager

Tanya Chapman
Intake Coordinator

Angie Emerson
Food Bank Manager

Ellen Murphy
Volunteer and Program Engagement

Cami Holtmeier
Food Bank Manager

Social Work Interns

Tana Berry

Cristina Carnie

Megan Markley

Paige Pereira

Food Bank Staff

Dan Bacon
Colin Gremse
Zeya Korytko
Thomas Murphy
Laurie Reese
Rebecca Rockefeller

Alison Spence

Board of Directors

Barbara Deines
President

Michael Dorsey
Vice-President

Pamela McClaran
Secretary

Mark Siler
Treasurer

Margo Dannemiller
Director

Rich Gawlowski
Director

Joan Hemphill
Director

Laura Quinn
Director

Jeffrey Wortley
Director

Michael Wright
Director

Community: Finally, the undercurrent of all our work this year has been the steady and consistent generosity of the Bainbridge Island community. This is truly a community which wants our friends and neighbors to have access to assistance and resources. **The generosity of the Island community, coming together for all those who were impacted negatively by the pandemic, got Helpline House through 2020.** From hundreds of hand sewn cloth masks donated on a regular basis to gift cards, many specifically for youth and senior holiday gifts, to financial contributions – this community set Helpline House up to not have to choose between services we could offer during the pandemic and allowed Helpline to be the central location for resources shared and given. 2020 saw Helpline live out its mission of inviting the community to become part of a circle of giving and receiving help – neighbor helping neighbor.



153 students

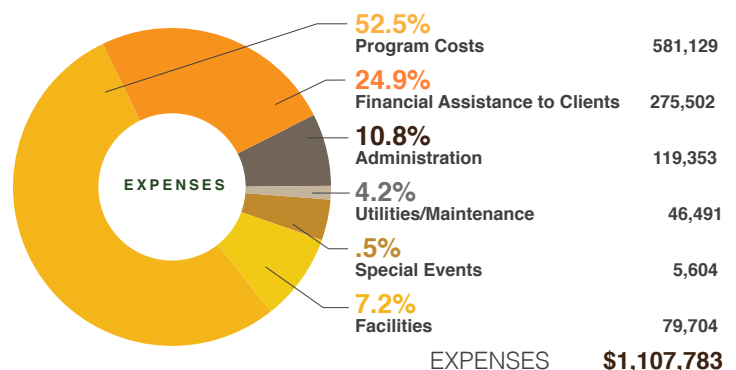
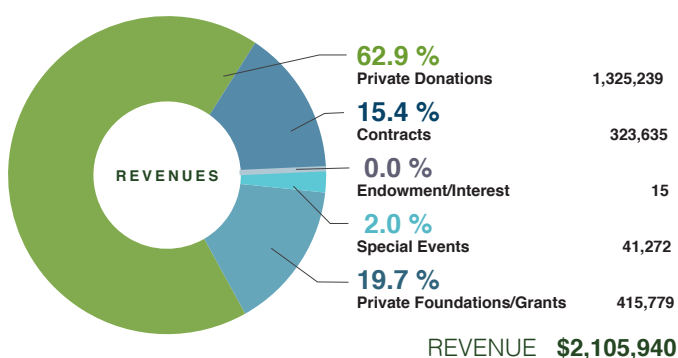
received some new school supplies to mark a fresh start for home and hybrid learning.



366 kids and 324 seniors

received local merchant gift cards that enabled them to capture a happier holiday.

Fiscal Year 2020 Financial Performance



* Private Donations includes One Call for All and Combined Campaigns. This does not reflect Endowment activity.
 ** Private Foundations/Grants includes donations made by individuals through family foundations as well as grant requests.

Join the Helpline House social network today.

