



Huckleberry
HOUSE

If Not for Community.

2022-2023
IMPACT REPORT

A Community All Youth Can Depend On

a message from our Executive Director

Since 1970, Huckleberry House has welcomed over 25,000 youth through the doors of the Teen Crisis Shelter, and has served thousands more through our Outreach, Transitional Living, and Counseling programs. And, our community has been with us every step of the way.

Huckleberry House was formed in 1970 by a group of University Area churches who recognized a need to keep runaway and homeless teens safe and off the street. Together, they formed what we now call the Teen Crisis Shelter. This collaborative spirit is part of what keeps central Ohio a growing and vibrant community. Yet, thousands of young people in Franklin County are disconnected from the many opportunities offered in this community, and from the adults they can trust for the support they need. Huckleberry House is here.

This Impact Report shares just a small snapshot of the support Huckleberry House receives in the community, and we are grateful that these partners share our mission: *With hope, we shelter, support, and guide youth navigating challenges.*

And there are so many more stories to tell:

- The hundreds of community members who make sure every young person we serve receives a gift during the holidays.
- The donations of household goods, hygiene products, and so much more, ensuring the young people we serve have the things they want and need.

- The meals prepared and served along with the weeding, painting, and cleaning that occurs, provided by corporate partners and individuals in our community.

We believe, and we know you do too, in the promise of every teen and young adult – that no matter their circumstances, they deserve a chance to be successful.

We believe, and we know you do too, that housing is more than a roof over our heads. It is a safe haven where youth can heal, recover, and grow.

We believe, and we know you do too, that every young person deserves to participate in all that our community has to offer, and that we ALL benefit when the needs of our neighbors are being met.

And, we are grateful to our community for all of the support.

If you have already made your end-of-year financial gift to Huckleberry House, thank you. If you haven't, we hope that you will make a gift today and support us in our vision for our community: *thriving youth, no matter their journey.*

Thank you.

– *Sonya Thesing* | Executive Director

HuckHouse.org/Donate



Huckleberry House Financials

DRAFT Consolidated statements of activities and change in net assets for the year ended June 30, 2023

REVENUE

Programs and Grants	\$ 3,473,910
United Way	\$ 90,000
Medicaid—Title XIX	\$ 649,514
Contributions	\$ 423,143
Rental and Utilities Income	\$ 379,480
Purchase of Services and Discretionary Funding	\$ 176,222
Interest and Dividend Income	\$ 54,558
Special Events	\$ 66,774
Net (Loss) Gain on Marketable Securities	\$ 95,264
Paycheck Protection Program	\$ -
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ -
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 5,408,865

EXPENSES

Transitional Living Program	\$ 1,782,252
Kenmore Housing	\$ 297,221
Crisis Shelter	\$ 1,192,310
Permanent Supportive Housing	\$ 215,638
Youth Outreach	\$ 411,044
Family Support	\$ 389,759
Scholarships	\$ 15,000
Fundraising	\$ 54,163
Administration	\$ 977,951
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 5,335,338
Change in Net Assets	\$ 73,527

NET ASSETS

Beginning of Year	\$ 3,561,135
End of Year	\$ 3,634,662



Every young person deserves a place to live and a chance to thrive. We hope you will join us at Sleep Out in 2024, and help us shine a light on youth homelessness in central Ohio. This year, Sleep Out will take place on the JPMorgan Chase Plaza at lower.com field.

More information about Sleep Out, including sponsorship opportunities, will be available after the first of the year. Thank you in advance for your support.



Mark your calendar and save the dates:
Registration Kick Off Event, April 18, 2024
Sleep Out, Friday, May 31, 2024

1,429 youth and adults engaged in the Youth Outreach Program

92% of transitional housing clients exited to safe and stable housing

367 youth served in the Teen Crisis Shelter with 88% transitioning to safe and stable housing

Over 10,000 hours of mental health support and life skills training across our programs

More than 35,000 nights of shelter provided across our programs

COUNSELING

Connecting Community Resources

In 2020, Huckleberry House expanded its outpatient counseling services to include students at The Ohio State University. As specialists working with young people between the ages of 18 and 24, this was a good fit for our Counseling Team, who work closely with college-aged students navigating their mental health and the stressors of being a student – especially during the pandemic.

They also came to realize that the needs of the college students were not dissimilar to the needs of the young people of the same age in our housing programs. In addition to mental health services, they were requesting housing assistance when dorms weren't available. They were asking for information about food pantries and food assistance. And, out-of-state students needed helping finding local medical services. In other words, these young people were in need of counseling and support for life skills development.

As the need for case management with community clients was becoming more and more evident, discussions

to again expand Counseling Services at Huckleberry House to include case management ***began in the spring of 2023.*** Connecting a young person to case management allows Huckleberry House to assist them with resources and strategies for housing, employment, school, budgeting, accessing community resources, and additional independent living skills.

With this expansion now in place, the Counseling Center at Huckleberry House is hopeful that the young people we serve in the community, just like those we serve in our programs, will increase progress to their goals, and remain stably housed. Our goal, as always, is to prevent homelessness before it begins.



CRISIS

“Building” Community

In the winter of 2022, Huckleberry House enjoyed an amazing community collaboration in partnership with members of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). The team led a complete renovation of the second floor of the crisis shelter that included new flooring, paint, and relevant artwork chosen in partnership with the young people we serve.

Thanks to financial support from the City of Columbus and the work of over 50 NARI volunteers, the Teen Crisis Shelter now has lounge space, additional bedrooms with the capacity to serve more youth in our community, and welcoming décor.

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OUTREACH

The Power of Community

A statement from a current Transitional Living Program client.

I was born into a family comprised of two parents and an older sibling. As a kid, my parents got divorced. I moved in with my mom and sister. It's a common scenario, but the normality ends here.

Throughout my childhood, it became more apparent that I was unsafe and unloved. My family quickly became my abusers, and I was subject to what I've come to describe as systematic torture... but, I kept quiet, and no one ever knew the full story.

*Picture taken by Client
in New Jersey.*



Eventually, things reached a breaking point. I knew I had to leave what was supposed to be my home. But, where would I go, and how would I make it on my own?

Without revealing the whole truth, I spoke to some trusted staff at my school, and they provided advice and resources, working with me to devise a plan. Among those connections was Huckleberry House. Before I left, I made contact with the Youth Outreach program, obtaining key information and a run-down on the next steps. This provided me with a greater sense of certainty and stability in the face of a shaky future. Upon escaping and thus becoming homeless, I maintained my contact with Huckleberry House, and everyone got right to work, helping in a multitude of ways and attempting to fulfill my basic needs. This support allowed for greater ease while I navigated another life chapter. Things were moving along, slowly but surely, until I found myself amidst an emergency situation.

"What now?" I asked.

Well, Huckleberry House had a few answers, and provided vital support where I would've otherwise been lost. As time went on, the overall outlook changed for the better, and I qualified for the Transitional Living Program, a crucial, all-inclusive opportunity that's been fundamental in changing the trajectory of my situation. Although I have much

more progress to make, the involvement of the Huckleberry House community has made a pivotal difference, poised to leave a positive imprint lasting well into my future.

Afterthoughts: Universal Direction, From One Community to Another

- You're loved. You matter. You have a purpose. Stay alive. I promise you, it's the better option.
- Regardless of whatever you're facing, you're never alone in it. Please remember that.
- Speaking up and reaching out will never fail you. You will happen upon the right people if you just keep on trying.
- Your past and the people in it do not define you. Know your worth, and don't lose sight of it, because it truly is priceless.
- Keep going. Even if they are small steps, don't hesitate to make them. Success is waiting; please don't leave it hanging.
- I'm Christian, and I owe everything to God. Ultimately, I believe that with Him, triumph is a given, even in the face of darkness. Take that as you may.

This may all sound cliché, I know, but I mean it all with 100% honesty. Even I doubted these takeaways, and still wrestle with their integrity today, but I speak from lived experience. That's the ultimate proof.

HOUSING

Big Lots and *the greatest day ever!*

Huckleberry House is fortunate to have support from the corporate and foundation community in central Ohio and beyond. From operational support for the Teen Crisis Shelter to program funding for our Parent Mentoring program, the in-kind and financial contributions we receive directly support our mission: *With hope, we shelter, support, and guide youth navigating challenges.*

In May 2023, Big Lots reached out with an amazing opportunity. The question? Are there transitional living apartments now, or in the future, in need of furnishings and household goods? The Big Lots Foundation, with a mission to improve and enrich the lives of families and children, was there to help.

"Receiving all those things from Big Lots was the biggest surprise of it all! When we got to Big Lots, I thought we were only picking things for the new residents. But when we were told that we were allowed to shop for our homes as well, that made it the greatest day ever."

Rhonda, former Transitional Living Program client



On June 12th, Katie Cramer and a team of Big Lots associates welcomed Huckleberry House youth and staff to shop and furnish 15 apartments with small appliances, beds, linens, decorative and functional items for each room of the apartment, and so much more. The contribution – nearly \$122,000 in household goods and furnishings.

Says Katie Cramer, Philanthropy and Events Manager for Big Lots, "As young people who have been in and out of shelters and temporary housing, the

majority of the lives of Huckleberry House youth have centered on getting the things they needed to survive. Today, they had a whole room of people inviting them into a safe space that felt like home where they could fill as many shopping carts as their hearts desired with no limits."

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Because of Big Lots, the youth who participated in this incredible day are able to think about their home and their community differently. Thank you for the opportunity and for being a valued member of the Huckleberry House community.



HOUSING

Mid-Ohio Food Collective at Marsh Brook Place

Marsh Brook Place is a 40-unit complex of Permanent Supportive Housing for young people, ages 18 – 24, on Columbus' east side. Built and operated by Community Housing Network and opened in 2020, Huckleberry House provides voluntary supportive services for the residents, including mental health counseling, case management, life skills training, employment services, and parent mentoring programs.

During the summer of 2022, our staff noticed many residents experiencing food insecurity. Some struggled to apply or recertify for food stamps or WIC. Others would use up their food allocation before month's end. And, many residents had no access to fresh foods or produce because of lack of transportation or access to a large grocery store.

It took one call to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective.

On the 2nd Thursday of each month, a Mobile Food Pantry arrives at Marsh Brook Place and is an event that everyone looks forward to each month. Not only does it alleviate food insecurity concerns, but it

has also helped to build community within the facility. Some clients help unload the truck and display the foods for pick-up. Others explore foods and produce they don't know very much about, trying new recipes and building new life skills. Others bring friends who may need additional resources or interventions that they can access through Huckleberry House. And, because it is so well attended, it is a great opportunity for other community organizations to be present and engage with Marsh Brook Place clients and staff, including (but not limited to) Southeast Behavioral Health Services, the Department of Jobs and Family Services, Equitas Health and Goodwill.

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We are grateful to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective and their mobile food pantry program. They are helping to ensure that the young people at Marsh Brook Place eat healthy and don't go hungry. And we are grateful to the many community organizations who step-up to supply health care, addiction and mental health resources, clothing and so much more for the young people served by Huckleberry House programs and services.

