



# House by the Side of the Road 2021 Annual Report

## Message from the House Manager

### 2021 Board members

Debra Dill  
President

Kevin Graber  
Vice-President

Rebecca Miller  
Secretary

Ken Westerman  
Treasurer

Jean Bush-Bacelis

Sara Deon

Dear Friends,

2021 was a year full of changes for the House by the Side of the Road. Our wonderful and hardworking House Manager Mary Danforth moved to warmer climates in April. In June we were able to start renting the upstairs of our building on 2051 S. State Street. We moved the kids & teen department and the sorting & tagging area upstairs. We were able to reverse some of our COVID rules: since July clients do not need an appointment to shop anymore and since November donors do not need an appointment to make donations.

The number of clients we served have been rising and we are back at the levels of families we serve before the pandemic. We are still receiving more clothing and households donations than we did before the pandemic. We have no paid staff and have about 30 volunteers each week, which is less than before the pandemic.

We are so grateful to the many people who volunteer at House by the Side of the Road and make our work possible. They come from all walks of life and include former clients, retirees, students, church groups, and people who need to complete their community service hours. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering contact us at [housebsr@gmail.com](mailto:housebsr@gmail.com) to find out how to get started.

Thank you for serving the community with us at House by the Side of the Road.

Best wishes,  
Gemaya Griffin  
House Manager

### Our mission

House by the Side of the Road's purpose is to provide FREE clothing and small household items to children and adults in need.



## Who We Are

At the House by the Side of the Road, we are happy to serve the needs of our clients. Volunteers and volunteer Board members bring special skills and dedication to the mission of the House by the Side of the Road. Our clients pay nothing and are not required to provide a referral. We are proud to report that we are uniquely a 100% volunteer run organization. That means we have NO paid staff but rely on the generosity of many individuals.

## Our Impact

In 2021 we served:

2097 families  
175 families/month (average)  
503 new clients

Our clients came from:

51% Ypsilanti  
35% Ann Arbor  
14% Other (4% other cities in Washtenaw County, 10% beyond Washtenaw County)

## We are a 100% volunteer-run organization

## Our Clients

Some clients are homeless, just re-entering society from prison, dealing with mental health issues, recent immigrants, or migrant workers. People come in after family breakup, job loss, fire, or prolonged illness.

## Client Story



I had a chance to sit down with one of our long-standing clients, Dawn, who has been coming to the House off and on for over 15 years. When times are good she donates! When fortunes change she “shops.” One thing is certain, according to Dawn the House offers “richness in diversity.” She noticed a diversity in donors, volunteers, clients, and available useful items.

Dawn was referred to the House at a low point in her life when she had lost her job and home. She eventually found an apartment and needed everything to re-start her life. The House was there for her. So was the Salvation Army and Avalon Housing. All of these places have helped her through times of need. Over the years, as her situation improved, she made sure to give back to the House. Our clients frequently become our most enthusiastic donors and volunteers.

In the bleaker days of the past, Dawn has had to make the best of living at the Delonis Center for months, in her camper, or even her car. There have been highs and lows over the years for Dawn, who felt she was forced out of a good job with a great company due to power politics and gender discrimination. What feels true to Dawn after all her experiences is that in our society, once there is an economic loss due to unemployment, or medical catastrophe, or some other financial problem, it is really hard to find your way back. Now things are going relatively well for her. Dawn works at Kroger and at Project Grow.

Dawn appreciates the people she has met at the House and the richness of languages and culture she finds on her visits. She ended her story with an invitation “to any and all.” She says, “We who begin lives again...come to the House.” *Interviewed by volunteer Elaine Shaw*

# The House: Then and Now



Please meet Phyllis Husted, 97 years young and full of stories about working at the House back in 1970 and even before. She remembers Janet Crabtree (from the First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor), the House's first Director, and Emma Binkowski (from St Francis of Assisi) whose brilliant idea ultimately became the House by the Side of the Road. Phyllis remembered that many volunteers from churches all over town maintained "Clothes Closets" and stored and hauled clothes around to central locations offering items for free one day a month or, at times, one day a week. It was frustrating for everyone, says Phyllis, a lot of work and it didn't really meet the needs of the community.

Phyllis really enjoyed the relationships that grew among the volunteers, including working with our current landlord's, Bob Ufer's, grandmother Hazel Ufer! The first location was part of an old seminary that had become a Washtenaw County building off Hogback Road. Picture this: clients walked in and came to the intake counter. Behind the counter, there was a small room for sorting where volunteers did their work. Items were piled on tables around the large, open room. "The blue light in the chapel area made people look dead," said Phyllis with a laugh. Not a very welcoming environment for anyone! Toward the end, Phyllis remembered being in charge of jewelry, purses, and scarves. "We counted and marked every little thing!"

Phyllis remembers a busy day meant managing up to 20 clients. One difference Phyllis noted was that 50 years ago people tended to have fewer clothes and to wear them until they wore out. She also remembers fewer immigrant families coming in as clients compared to these days. As she tells it the experience for clients was not like "shopping." The clients seemed so sad and quite desperate. Phyllis was really pleased to be able help people in the community. One thing that hasn't changed: lots of items were donated! It was and is a good problem to have.

Another volunteer, Carole Hunter, started with us about 2000. She started at one of the Hogback Road locations and the other buildings: Phoenix Drive in Ann Arbor, Elder Street in Ypsilanti and then to the current South State Street building. Carole said it was hard in the other, smaller spots: there was no place for children and not much room for children's items. She remembered fondly, working with former House Directors, Frances Arnett and Raycean Hunter.

Carole recalled the set-up at the Ypsilanti location meant having the clients tell volunteers what they needed, and the volunteers would pick out the items from a back room. Compared to today's shopping, it's hard to imagine how that would work! Then and now, Carole is impressed with how appreciative and grateful people are for the support we offer and items they can take. She remembered, with a laugh, one client actually took the clock off the wall!

The best parts for Carole included the comradery among volunteers and knowing that we are helping people. She also remembered fondly working with Phyllis Husted, Prudy Dittmar, Roberta King and Carole Starnes and is anxious to come back when we are once and for all beyond the pandemic risk.

What a joy it is now to have a spacious, well-stocked and organized space with plenty of items for our clients. Our hope is that we have become a community resource where everyone feels welcomed and respected. Things have definitely changed over the years, but we try to stay relevant.



# How You Can Help

## Give Funds

Consider helping to support the House.

- Become a sustaining donor by donating any amount per month
- Honor someone (birthday, anniversary, return of good health, graduation, wedding...)

Give today! Go to:

[www.housebythesideoftheroad.org](http://www.housebythesideoftheroad.org)

## Volunteer

Our volunteers are the heart of what we do. We need people to receive, sort, tag and hang up clothes, sort and display household items, and check in and check out clients. Call us at 734-769-4085 or email us at [housebyroad@gmail.com](mailto:housebyroad@gmail.com).

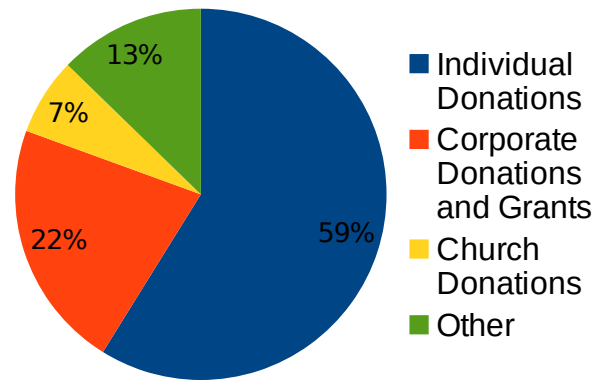
## Donate Clothes and Household items

Our current needs are:

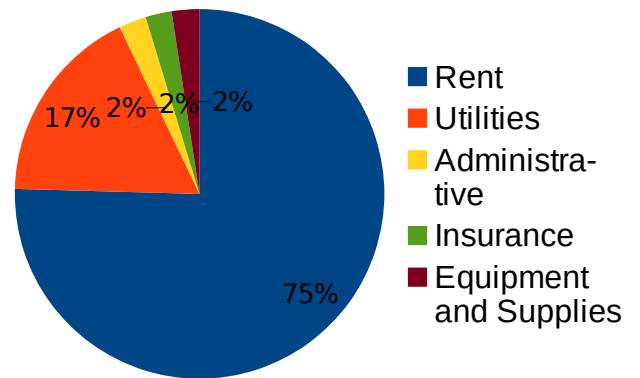
- Pots and pans
- Sheets and blankets
- Towels
- Small appliances
- Backpacks/suitcases
- Tennis shoes
- Pajamas
- Men's jeans

# Financials

Revenue	
Individual Donations	\$48,047
Corporate Donations and Grants	\$17,723
Church Donations	\$5,487
Other	\$10,397
	<b>\$81,654</b>



Expenses	
Rent	\$36,498
Utilities	\$8,456
Administrative	\$1,160
Insurance	\$1,095
Equipment and Supplies	\$1,181
	<b>\$48,390</b>



Our increase in expenses related to adding the second floor mid 2021 means we need to maintain our 2021 level of revenue in 2022. Anticipated expenses for 2022 are over \$75,000.

## Contact

2051 South State Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-769-4085

[housebyroad@gmail.com](mailto:housebyroad@gmail.com)

[www.HousebytheSideoftheRoad.org](http://www.HousebytheSideoftheRoad.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/housebysideoftheroadAnnArbor/>

## Hours

Open for clients:

Monday - Friday, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Open for donations:

Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 1:30pm