



Upper Valley Haven Donor Impact Report

WINTER
2021



Thanksgiving
Meal kit contents
14lb Turkey
10lbs Potatoes
Cranberry Sauce
Butternut Squash
Stuffing Mix
Gravy

TURKEY DAY ROUNDUP!

More than 70 volunteers and Upper Valley Haven staff were on hand at Hartford High School for the annual drive-thru Thanksgiving meal pick-up event. Flu vaccines, offered by Good Neighbor Health Clinic, were available to all. **Thanks to you, we gave out more than 1,000 turkeys and side dishes to our community!**



You Are Changing and Touching Lives!

A letter from Michael

It was just about a year ago that everything changed. We found ourselves, as a community, thrust into the most challenging of times. It would have been easy for people to think only of themselves.

You did the opposite. You thought of others.

As Upper Valley families were impacted by the pandemic, this community rallied to lend help and encouragement to our neighbors. The outpouring of compassion has been quick and generous, allowing the Haven to not only to remain open, but to expand our services continuing to serve those in need.

We've faced additional operating costs,

taken numerous measures to ensure everyone's safety, and we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of people turning to the Haven for help. We could meet these challenges because of you and many friends of the Haven who responded to our request for support. I hope you will be encouraged reading though this Report. The numbers represent real people you've helped, your Upper Valley neighbors. The impact of your giving is seen in their stories and in their smiling faces.

As this pandemic lingers on, isolation is a huge issue. As you can imagine, feelings of isolation and loneliness are only exacerbated by the cold of winter. Many Upper Valley residents are asking, *How*

can I help my neighbor? We've included a few suggestions in this document. Please continue to reach out and care for one another.

It was 40 years ago that the Haven was founded on the principle of neighbors coming together, helping one another, offering a hand-up. You make it happen.

Thank you for embodying community. We are getting through this ... together.



With much appreciation,

Michael

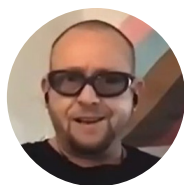
Michael Redmond
Executive Director

Awareness Day Reminds Us Not To Judge A Book By Its Cover

January 27th was *Homelessness Awareness Day* in Vermont. The Vermont House Committee on General Housing held a Zoom program honoring the day and acknowledging the dire need for more safe, secure, and affordable housing in the state. Former Hixon House Adult Shelter guest Sean Elsass was invited to testify on his lived experience with homelessness.

Sean moved to Vermont from Texas in 2011 and never thought that he would ever be without work, much less homeless. Sean always worked hard, often 2 to 3 jobs to be able to afford what he needed and what he wanted in life. Sean was a Lieutenant in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and then joined the Vermont Department of Corrections.

In 2019, faced with illness and medical needs, Sean was unable to work. Quickly he used his savings to pay bills and by late 2019 with cold weather setting in Sean lost his housing and resorted to living in his



Homelessness is the worst feeling ever, and it's the worst feeling when people look at you like you're not a human being.

— Sean Elsass, former Haven shelter guest

car. Without resources or family in the area he took a friend's advice to seek help from the Vermont Department of Economic Services. After a brief stay in a motel, Sean connected with Service Coordinator Nancy Griffin at the Haven. With Nancy's help Sean moved into Hixon House in December of 2019.

Until that point Sean had looked down on homeless individuals. "I believed that that only thieves and addicts can become homeless." Sean's voice quavers when he explains how he felt when he unbelievably found himself facing homelessness. "Your dignity is really gone when you hit a low like that in life. Homelessness is the worst feeling ever, and it's the worst feeling when people look at you like you're not a human being, and that's how I felt." Sean was

grateful for staff at the Haven who reassured and helped him. He also praised the Hixon House staff for helping him to feel safe when fellow residents learned that he was a transgender man. "The staff were so kind and helped me to feel safe."

When COVID-19 hit in mid-March 2020 Sean was one of the first shelter guests moved to a local motel room due to his high-risk status. By April however, Sean was housed in his own apartment in Bethel, VT.

Sean ended his testimony by reminding us to not judge book by a cover, "open the book and get to know what someone's background is." He encouraged those listening to take their time to get to know homeless people, those with mental health issues, the elderly and even addicts. "They are worth your time and are someone's mother or brother. Something traumatic happened to them. I wish people would be kinder to each other."

To hear more from Sean visit tinyurl.com/homless-awareness-vt

I don't have to panic anymore. I know I can use the Food Shelf and work with other local agencies to get us through.

— Former Haven shelter guest & father of two sons

Accessing the Food Shelf — Safe, Easy, Nutritious and For Everyone

THE FOOD SHELF BY THE NUMBERS

November 27 - December 31

869 Total households served

239 New households registered

3,036 Total individuals served

960 Cafe-prepared meals served



1. A client calls in to the Food Shelf from the safety of their car. 2. A staff member gathers food. 3. A box of nutritious food is lovingly packed and ready for curbside pick up!

19 DAYS OF NORWICH AND THE VALLEY

The Valley Comes Together



19 Days of Norwich and the Valley began eight years ago at Dan and Whit's as an effort to help stock the Haven's Food Shelf. It has grown to be our largest fundraising event of the year.

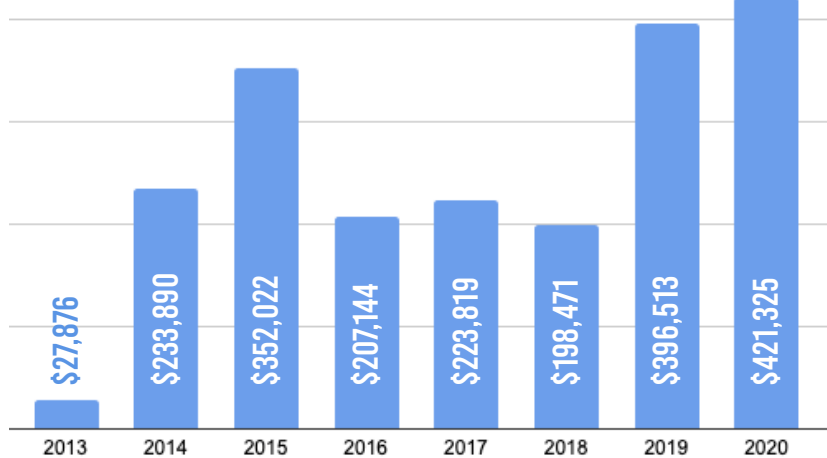
The global pandemic could have shut the initiative down entirely and yet, this year, local businesses and Upper Valley residents were more creative, thoughtful, and generous than

ever before. Boosted by a \$150,000 match from The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, more than \$421,000 was raised to support our neighbors experiencing food insecurity, homelessness, and poverty.

Thank you for giving. Your gifts will provide help and hope to individuals and families across the Upper Valley throughout the coming year.

19 DAYS OF FUNDRAISING

Totals to Date



Trying to offset some of the hate in the world today by giving to those in need.

—a message included with an online donation

Upper Valley residents are asking, **WHAT CAN I DO?**

Check in with your neighbors regularly. Many are not only struggling financially, but some may be struggling with feelings of isolation and loneliness as well. And remember, groceries from the Food Shelf are available to anyone who could use them and there are no requirements for registration. Residents of both Vermont and New Hampshire can come without quarantining before or after. Here are some easy ways you can help:

- ♥ **Call and/or text them**
- ♥ **Leave a note on their door or in their mailbox**
- ♥ **Send a private Facebook message**
- ♥ **Have a socially distanced chat in the driveway**
- ♥ **Ask if they need anything**
- ♥ **Offer to pick up groceries or medicines for them**
- ♥ **Volunteer**
- ♥ **Give to the Haven and other local organizations serving neighbors in need**

Community members interested in volunteering with the Haven can reach out to Kerri, our Volunteer Services Coordinator, by email at kweeks@uppervalleyhaven.org or phone at (802) 478-1865.

If you or someone you know is in need of services, please reach out to Jennifer Fontaine, food assistance, (802) 478-1850; Gwen Williams, shelter or housing assistance, (802) 478-1822; or Nancy Griffin, household goods, shelter or housing assistance, (802) 478-1808.

If you need help or have questions, please give us a call. **We love to connect with our neighbors!**

CURRENT WISH LIST

Personal Items

- Shampoo
- Body wash
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorant
- Feminine Hygiene Products

Always Needed

- Peanut butter
- Tuna
- Pasta of all kinds
- Canned vegetables
- Pasta sauce
- Soups or broths
- Canned tomatoes
- Macaroni & cheese
- Canned fruit

Other Needs

- New or like-new water resistant winter coats for all ages
- New or like-new waterproof/water resistant gloves and mittens
- Gift cards to Walmart
- Can openers

WE ASKED. YOU RESPONDED. WE STAND TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY!



Never too young to donate!

Donors like you have gone above and beyond in helping our community through these complicated times. **As COVID threatened to increase food insecurity, YOU INCREASED YOUR GENEROSITY!** Thank you for helping to make the Upper Valley the kind of community we long for—where people can find hope and discover possibility.



Loads of toys from the UV Aquatic Center



A large sock donation from DHMC



Thank you!

SUPPORT THE HAVEN FAR INTO THE FUTURE

You care about your community. Planned gifts are a great way to make a lasting impact, leave a legacy, and further the cause you believe in and let us know of your decision so we can add your name to our legacy honor roll.

One sentence in your will can make a lifetime of difference.

To leave a gift in your will, simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner:

"I bequeath \$_____ or _____% of my estate to Upper Valley Haven, 713 Hartford Avenue, White River Junction, VT 05001."

SAVE THE DATE!

