

Annual Report



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20th Anniversary
Edition

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Our **Core Purpose** is to provide transformative services to families. Our **Mission Statement** is to provide stable housing, comprehensive services, and advocacy for families in need of support. The **Vision** of North Star is being a bridge of independence that ensures stable living for all.

This year,
North Star
celebrated
20 years of
helping the
community.



Letter from Leadership.



State Representative Natalie Higgins presents Jon Hogue, President & CEO of North Star Family Services with a congratulatory citation for 20 years of work in the community.

2022 presented many agency challenges where strategic planning and determination brought forth our desired goals.

COVID

As an agency and internationally we had one foot in the COVID world still and one foot back to normal life. Traffic inside the shelter was still minimized and our volunteers had limited exposure with our families. Staff and families wrestled with “quarantining” sick clients or staff when necessary. North Star continued to assist the homeless families in North Central Massachusetts as we have for the past twenty years.

20th Year Anniversary

This year we celebrated our 20th year as the safety net to homeless families in our region. We had a spectacular event at the Leominster Elks where all of our volunteer groups were recognized, inspirational words from Susan Muthee, former North Star family and current board member, and Pastor Emy from The Life Church sharing some of his personal experiences with homelessness. The message of the evening was how unique and special North Star’s services, staff and volunteers are. North Star goes the extra mile to help families; providing resources, listening, educating, mentoring, and caring.

Journey Home Project

This year was very busy for our supportive housing project evolution. A capital campaign spearheaded by Campaign Chair-Marty Connors, Rollstone Bank President & CEO and his wife Kit Connors and Robert Antonucci, President Emeritus of Fitchburg State University, Phil Grzewinski, Consultant was conducted where significant funds

were pledged and raised. Fundraising will be used towards the construction, start-up, and ongoing operation of the 15 new construction, affordable housing stock that will be sited in Leominster. The project will cost approximately eight million to construct and funds raised should cover a majority of that cost. North Star is very appreciative of the community leaders and donors that stepped forward to assist this critical project for low income/homeless families in our community.

Equity

North Star continues to strive to level the playing field for low-income and homeless families in many of the social determinants of health areas – most importantly ensuring that all families have access to safe, comfortable, and affordable housing. North Star remains committed to provide solutions to family homelessness.

Having a HOME is Critically Important to Every Family

2023 will be a year of growth, learning and reinvention. Construction of the Journey Home housing project is scheduled for early-summer. Our subsidized, new construction apartments, as a continuum linked to our family homeless shelter, is an unparalleled model in our region.

North Star thanks all of our donors, volunteers, business leaders and supporters. As a truly community funded agency, we could not do our work without you.



Jon Hogue, Ed.D
President & CEO
North Star



Adam Weber
Board Chair
North Star

Journey Home Project Update.

In 2017, North Star made the commitment to explore the creation of subsidized housing for low-income and homeless families. Since then we remained focused on assembling a strong consultant team to make this possible.

Additionally, a parcel of land very close to the shelter was purchased, zoning and permits were obtained, architectural documents were started, and site planning was conducted.



North Star will build 15 units of supportive affordable housing on a 12-acre parcel in Leominster.

In 2022, architectural plans were finalized and evolved into construction documents. A construction manager was identified, subcontract bidding process was completed for materials and labor and energy efficiency audits planning was outsourced.

We conducted a capital campaign for the project throughout the 2022 year. Our campaign was exceedingly successful where roughly eight million dollars was raised through private donors, community leaders and state and federal commitments. A majority of funds will be used to prepare the site, construct the 15-unit apartment house, as well as, parking and play area for the children.

While in the community raising funds for the construction of Journey Home, an anonymous donor came forward and created a multi-million-dollar fund, held at the Community Foundation of North Central Mass. The annual proceeds will benefit the operations of the North Star agency and Journey Home housing program.

We are scheduled to break ground in early-summer 2023. This will be a spectacular and momentous accomplishment for the North Star Family Services agency. All of the hard work will be worth it knowing that we have created the beginning of a solution to family homelessness in the North Central Mass. region for the next 40 -50 years.

The capital
campaign for
the Journey
Home project
raised nearly

**\$8,000,000
DOLLARS.**

2022

Year in Review.

12
Families Improved Income

312 Meals Served

299 Screenings & Referrals

15 Families Assisted

9
Families Gained Housing Independence



Warm dinners served in the communal kitchen by volunteer groups



Screening sessions completed and referral calls provided to eligible candidates



20 Adults and 21 children that were admitted into the North Star Facility for room, board and independence coaching



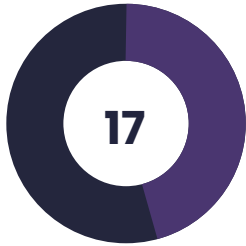
Families that successfully moved in to permanent housing



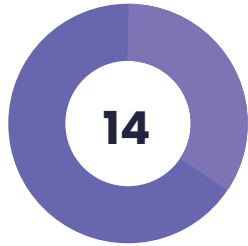
Improved income by becoming employed or improved their employment situation



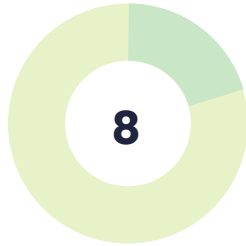
DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



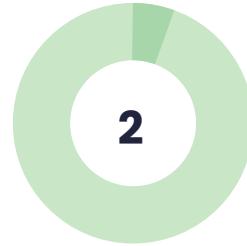
White



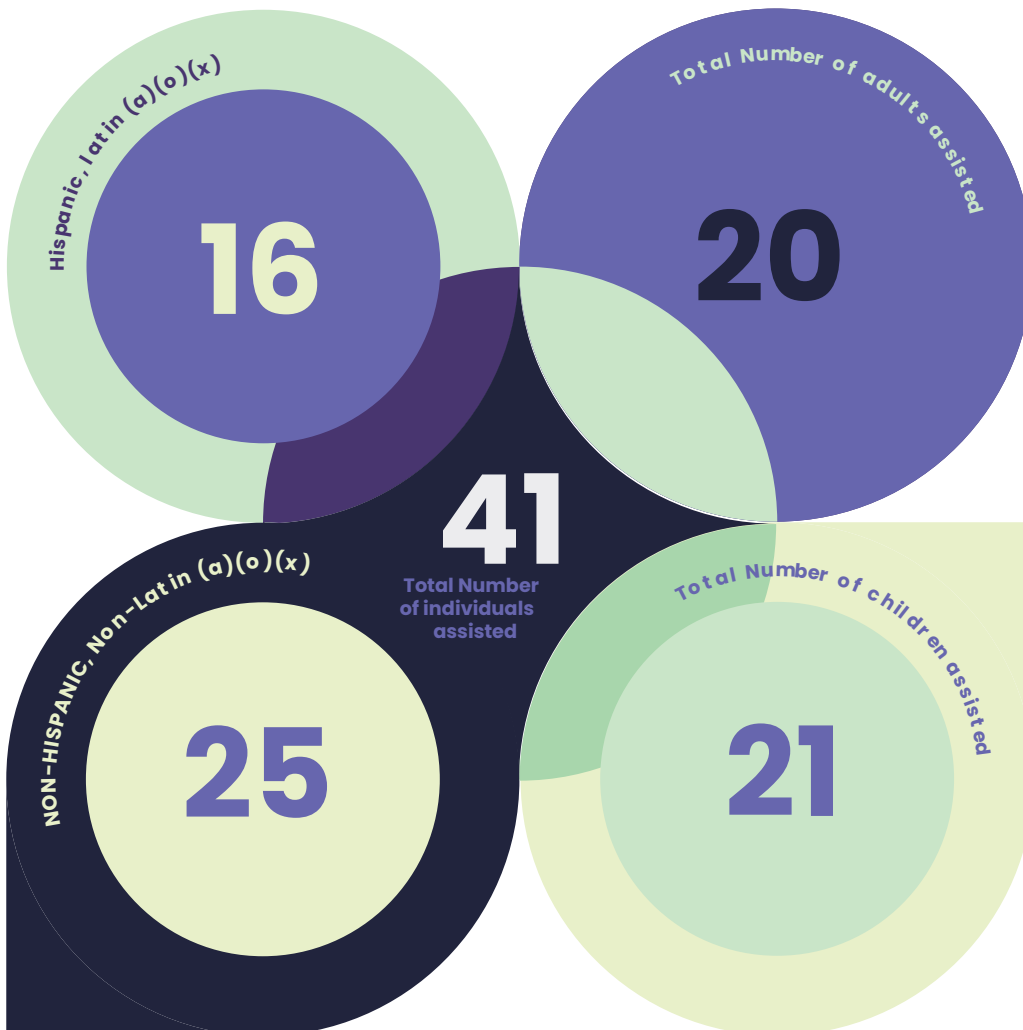
Black,
African
American,
or Africa



Multiple
Races



Asian or
Asian
American



Celebrating 20 Years of Impact and Innovation.



Director of Shelter and Equity Services Jana Murphy, Founder & President Emeritus Bonnie Hathaway and Coordinator of Saint Bernard Parish Marie Bedard.

North Star Family Services, Inc. recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, and the trailblazing organization could not be more grateful to everyone who helped get them here—and more excited for their plans ahead.

North Star was founded as the Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network (MIHN) in 2003 by Leominster resident Bonnie Hathaway.

“Bonnie noticed that families in our region needed help, as there weren’t services that kept homeless families together—women and children would go to one shelter and men to another,” says Dr. Jon Hogue, the current President & CEO of North Star. “Instead of just talking about the problem, Bonnie decided to do something about it.”

Bonnie approached her church, Pilgrim Congregational Church of Leominster, with the solution of joining with Interfaith Hospitality Network (now Family Promise), a national network that brings together local community resources to create a system of support for homeless families.

MIHN soon became a certified non-profit organization and recruited 10 local churches to provide shelter and assistance. Each church took a week rotation hosting families overnight, while community volunteers cooked fresh meals for families.

Over the next several years, the MIHN board of directors and volunteers refined their system as they overcame multiple challenges, including building code issues and volunteer turnover. Perhaps most significantly, they faced the need to find a suitable permanent space, as the “homeless shelter without a home” transitioned between church basements, convents, and apartment buildings.

After Hogue was hired in early 2015, we focused on strengthening the organization while retaining our unique mission.

“When I came on board, we kept the organization’s model but expanded upon it, including seeking more grants and donations,” says Hogue. “After we heard about a building for sale on Main Street in Leominster, we were able to find an anonymous donor to help us purchase it, and we’ve been there ever since.”

Located at 758 Main Street, the shelter can accommodate five families at a time, including grandparents and other relatives living as family. The building features a large community room, communal kitchen in which local volunteers continue to serve meals each evening, and offices where staff members coordinate key services including case management and skill building.

“The primary focus of many shelters is to put roofs over heads at night, but with our shelter, families get a whole host of resources and support,” says Hogue. “We provide wrap around services that help families help themselves so that they can succeed, from assistance with finding jobs and obtaining insurance to transporting kids to school.”

In 2019, MIHN officially changed its name to North Star Family Services, Inc. Around the same time, they made another big decision.

“A few years ago, we began to see that once families were ready to leave us, they had trouble finding apartments, especially as costs have risen with inflation,” says Hogue.

The solution?

“We decided to become a developer of affordable housing,” says Hogue. “For the past five years, we’ve been laying the groundwork to construct affordable apartments.”

North Star’s first foray into apartment building is Journey Home, a 15-unit apartment complex located down the street from our shelter. When the project officially breaks ground—projected to occur this summer—it will be the first-ever housing continuum in the region, enabling homeless families to transition from North Star’s

emergency shelter to long-term housing.

In the future, they hope to replicate the model to provide even more housing and create permanent changes for families.

“What is the solution to stopping family homelessness? Having a home,” says Hogue. “Shelter is triage, but in the end, to be successful, you have to have a home – a place to kick off your shoes, feel safe, and raise your children. With Journey Home, we’re delivering on that vision.”

North Star recognizes that developing an apartment building is an unusual—and difficult—endeavor for a non-profit organization.

“We’re a small non-profit and didn’t have any experience being a housing developer. It’s been a long, hard road, from getting donations to purchase land to working with the city on zoning issues,” says Hogue. “But homelessness is currently at crisis levels, and affordable housing is so badly needed that we were willing to take on this challenge.”

In its 20 years of operation, North Star has served more than 340 families through its shelter and provided crucial referrals to thousands of additional families. As Hogue notes, they’ve done it all thanks to the amazing dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community of donors and supporters.

“As North Star, we’re passionate about what we do, and we’re not afraid to take risks and jump right in, just like Bonnie did twenty years ago,” says Hogue. “We see the problem and do our best to find a way through it. As we celebrate twenty years, our main message is that we are still here, and we are still as determined as ever.”

Celebrating 20 Years of Helping Families.





(Page 9, clockwise from top left) Board Chair Adam Weber, Director of Shelter and Equity Services Jana Murphy and Carol Wright from New Hope Church. Adam Weber, Tabitha Levesque from Garden Remedies and Jana Murphy. Neal and Genifer Anderson, former board members, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church. President & CEO Dr. Jon Hogue. (Page 10) Susan Muthee, sitting board member and former client.

The North Star 20th Anniversary Recognition Event.

September 29, 2022

2022 ENTRANTS

Progress Report.

15

Families
Admitted

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Coach Professional Development
- Teach Fiscal Responsibility
- Support Financial Independence

\$45,789

Total Monies Saved

\$42,685

Money Saved
on Exit

\$3,104

Debt Paid Down
During Stay

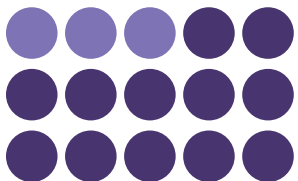


\$221

Average Debt Paid
Down During Stay

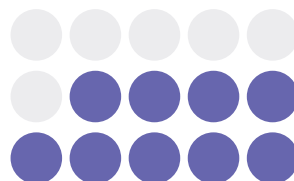
\$3,270

Average Money
Saved per Family



80%

Families Advanced
Employment or Employability



60%

Families Transitioned
to Permanent Housing

Financial Statement.

- **\$5,339**
Fundraising
- **\$16,850**
Volunteer Rotation Groups
- **\$45,756**
Individual Donors
- **\$63,880**
Corporate Contributions
- **\$74,852**
Government Funding
- **\$252,788**
Funding from Grants

\$459k
Total Contributions

Staff & Volunteers.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Dr. Jon Hogue
President & CEO

Tabitha Cardona
Vice President of
Administration

Jana Murphy
Director of Shelter
and Equity Services

The passionate
and talented
people behind
our success

Grissel Tejada
Case Manager

Raymond Pfeifle
House Manager

Anita Sullivan
House Manager II

VOLUNTEER ROTATION GROUPS

City United Church

College Church of Seventh-day Adventist

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church

Fitchburg/Townsend Seventh-day Adventist

Garden Remedies

Hope Chapel

Leominster Seventh-day Adventist

Leominster United Methodist Church

Lunenburg Turkey Hill Family Lions Club

New Hope Community Church

NewLife Church

Pilgrim Congregational Church

Saint Anthony de Padua Church

Saint Bernard Parish

Saint Boniface Parish

Saint Cecilia Parish

Saint Leo Parish

The Life Church MA

United Parish of Lunenburg

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Adam Weber
Board Chair

Sarita Fage
Clerk

Tracy Lafleur
Treasurer

Directors

Ken Berry

Susan Muthee

Brian Calnan

Eileen O'Leary

Travis Condon

Wayne Pineau

Miatta Edi-Osagi

Pat Read

**Caroline
MacLeod-Sawyer**

Ann Walsh-MacLeod

Founder, Board President Emeritus

Bonnie Hathaway

On behalf of the North Star
agency and the families we
serve,

THANK YOU.

We are blessed by all of you,
our donors, volunteers, board
members, and staff.







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