

BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD



HELPING HANDS, INC. 2023 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



aiken youth
EMPOWERMENT™

= Shaping Brighter Futures

CEO'S NOTE



As we continue to celebrate our 50th anniversary here at Helping Hands, Inc., we also embrace the past and are gearing up to a brighter future! Helping Hands, Inc. has had a positive impact both with the youth we served and families in our community. Over time our programs have evolved to better accommodate the needs of young people that are victims of abuse and/or neglect.

Helping Hands' Board of Directors and staff are continuously planning new and innovative approaches to

provide services to both Residential and Community clients. In doing so we are excited about rekindling old partnerships, maintaining current partnerships, and creating new relationships in our community. Helping Hands, Inc. has relied on the assistance of the community since 1973 to provide the services to our clients and their families. We are grateful to all the individuals that have made our program successful thus far.

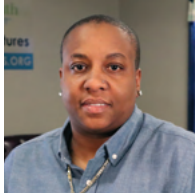
As we move forward to the next 50 years, I am excited about the plans for the agency's future. Enriching the lives and well-being of youth and families through a continuum of care will continue to be our mission and goal for the agency. As we continue to evolve our programs and services offered, I am really excited for the brighter days ahead!

Monica Jeffcoat
Chief Executive Officer

A YEAR IN PICTURES



Top left: The 27th Annual Triple Crown Golf Classic; Top right: 50th Anniversary Celebration; Middle left: City of Aiken Proclamation for Helping Hands 50th Anniversary; Middle right: WJBF volunteers organizing our clothing closet; Bottom left: AYE Teen Maze Youth having a blast; Bottom right: The 20th Annual A Chef's Extravaganza



NURTURING & EDUCATING YOUTH IN OUR CARE

Brandi Betties *Director of Residential Services & Education Advocate*

Our residents are a mixture of females, males, and teen moms from all ethnic backgrounds. On average, we serve about 15-20 residents within a month. We often keep residents until they can be reunited with their families or get adopted into a new family. This year, we had a few residents reunited with their families and one was adopted on their birthday. We believe in providing top-notch care and making the environment feel at home while they are in the residence.

We have sponsors that help create first moments for some residents and memorable moments for others. Our residents traveled to Atlanta, Myrtle Beach, amusement parks, the county fair, and other local activities and events allowing them to have a great time during their stay at Helping Hands.

EDUCATION

While working with residents to start their educational journey, it can be very difficult. We often see residents not in the right grade or developmentally in an appropriate grade level. This challenge arises every time we receive a new resident in care. They are out of our control due to lack of consistency of being in school or being moved around.

We overcame such challenges by having several meetings with the feeder schools, and the school guidance counselors, and receiving the Best Interest Determination (BID) from DSS prior to enrolling them into school. We also retrieve their records and make sure that we are giving them the best opportunity possible for their educational journey. We offer not



Left: Residents and staff eating out; Right: Residents at Carowinds

only traditional schooling but Adult Education, virtual education, and alternative education.

I started in November 2022, and have noticed a great change in some of the residents' grades. We have residents who have chosen Adult Education and completed the necessary courses or completed all courses and obtained their GED during their stay at Helping Hands. In May 2023, we had 8 residents promoted to their next grade and 1 resident received their GED due to an endless amount of tutoring sessions and having the opportunity to stay after school for extra help.

It is our goal moving forward to maintain data to track progress and to provide the necessary resources on campus to the residents. Also, to assist the residents to obtain the skills needed and achieve the outcomes to be lifelong learners.



NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH IN OUR AGENCY

Rysheeka Bush *Clinical Program Manager*

Mental health is a vital component to all. One of the things that the pandemic taught us is how fragile mental health can be if not sustained properly. Maneuvering the clinical world, post covid, has been surprisingly smooth in many respects. There were relationships and protocols established in that timeframe that laid the groundwork for a strong clinical network that the staff and residents rely on.

Young people are able to easily reconnect with providers through telehealth to maintain the therapeutic relationship that is so vital to their emotional health. Local medical providers have established a rapport with our staff and understand the unique needs of our youth and are a great resource for navigation the process of tracking down vital information. My position has not changed in that I remain a

resource for residents who require a mental health assessment or a provider. I also remain a resource for staff members who may need a safe space to process a bad day or a challenging resident.

However, what has changed is the level of mental health disturbance expressed by our youth. If one would consider the unstable nature of a home in which abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect is happening and combine that with the instability of nation (i.e. during and post pandemic), you could certainly see how some youths are experiencing more distress than ever. The number of calls to assist with the management of a behavioral or mental health disturbance has increased in the past year. It has been a tremendous asset to have therapeutically trained staff members present to

help deescalate during these times. A therapeutic response can make the difference between a youth feeling validated and able to express their needs and a youth continuing to experience the cycle of negative adult interactions.

The clinical division of the agency provides the ray of hope that both youth and staff need to nurture an environment of safety and well-being. We are the place where individuals can express themselves without judgement and ridicule. We are the place where healing begins, and the world begins to feel a little safer.



Rysheeka Bush talking with a resident about their plans.



AIKEN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT RECAP

Tiiu Goode *Director of Community Programming*

As we look to Brighter Days Ahead, let's take a brief moment to capture what has happened over the past year.

The Girls Circle and the Council for Boys and Young Men has been implemented in Aiken County Public Schools for several years. Girls Circle is designed to increase positive connection, strengths, and competence in girls. The Council for Boys and Young Men is designed for boys and young men gain the vital opportunity to address masculine definitions and behaviors and build capacities to find their innate value and create good lives -individually and collectively. We did see a decrease during the peak of COVID. However, we have been able to add a few new sites this past year thanks to those that allowed us to come in and work with your young people.

With our continued partnership with Fact Forward, we were able to implement Plan A. Plan A is a theory-based and evidence-informed 23-minute entertainment-education video intervention developed to reduce unplanned pregnancies and STIs. We were able to reach 132 young people in Aiken County. Thanks to the parents and youth groups that allowed us to come in and bring knowledge and awareness to the young people.

Because of our continued partnerships and dedicated staff, we are able to reach more youth in Aiken County. By bringing awareness and knowledge to the youth in Aiken County, we can continue to strive to see positive outcomes as it relates to decision-making and peer pressure. I am excited to see Brighter Days Ahead!



Top: Girls Circle at North Aiken Elementary; Middle left: Tiiu Goode and Shi'Tavia Johnson at North Augusta High School; Middle right: Monica Jeffcoat and Tiiu Goode receive an award from Fact Forward for Plan A; Bottom: The Council for Boys and Young Men participants at Clearwater Elementary School;

HELPING HANDS 2022 STATS



51

Active Volunteers



515.5

Volunteer hours



\$12,887.50

Fiscal impact of
volunteer hours



RESIDENTIAL



6

Average children per
day



21

Average days in
our care



34 hours

Life Skills instruction for
teens



11,736

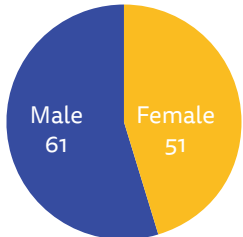
Miles traveled



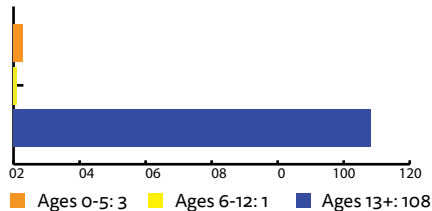
\$25,266.33

Amount spent on groceries for three
meals and snacks each day

RESIDENTS' GENDER



RESIDENTS' AGE



COMMUNITY EDUCATION



288

Career Readiness
Participants



37

Work Experience
Participants



365

Reproductive Health
Classes



94

Participants in Girls
Circle



92

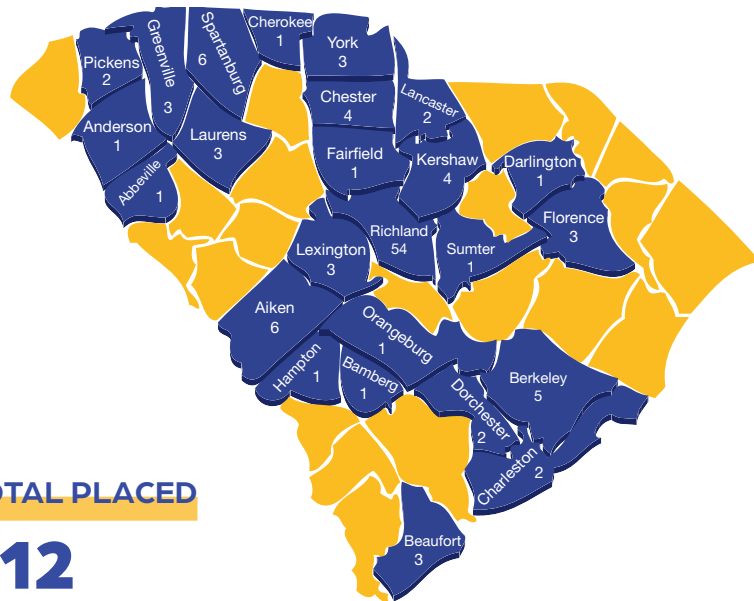
Puberty Classes



132

Plan A

PLACEMENT BY COUNTY



TOTAL PLACED

112

39 staff members



887.56

Staff continuing education hours completed

FINANCES

Revenue 1,190,293
Expenses -1,523,160
-\$332,867

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Helping Hands, Inc. is an emergency home for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, abandonment and/or neglect.

MISSION

Helping Hands is committed to enriching the quality of life and well-being of children, youth and families in need through a continuum of residential and community-based services in order to improve their health, independent living skills, educational outcomes, and/or resilience.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

F. Malcolm Smith *President*
Teresa J. Felder *Secretary*
Marion Demers-Crotty *Treasurer*
Eboni Collins
Brenda Holland
Janice Kitchings
Keith Glover

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that every child deserves a nurturing and caring family, no matter what it looks like.

We believe in shaping brighter futures by empowering youth and families to make healthy decisions.

We believe that success is individually defined.

We believe that children deserve a safe place to learn and grow.

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