



# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT





## DEAR FRIENDS,

The fiscal year 2023-24 has been a pivotal period for Friends Association as we consolidate our past growth and look toward a more expansive future. With the winding down of emergency funding from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken this opportunity to assess and refine the programs we launched and expanded over the past two years.

We also bid farewell to our CEO, Jennifer Lopez, with heartfelt gratitude for her leadership and contributions as she transitioned into retirement and were excited

to welcome Joyce Chester as our new CEO. Joyce brings over 20 years of successful leadership at Chester County Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) and has embarked on a listening tour to engage with staff, funders, and stakeholders, gathering valuable insights into Friends Association's strengths and challenges.

Amidst this transition, our dedicated team has continued to provide vital



homelessness prevention and recovery services to over 1,400 Chester County residents in 498 families. This achievement reinforces our position as one of the premier organization addressing family homelessness in the area.

We are immensely grateful for the unwavering commitment of our Board of Directors and dedicated team of employees, as well as the generous support from foundations, government agencies, individual donors, and volunteers who have made our work possible. Together, we are making a meaningful impact in the lives of families in need.

Thank you for your support as we move forward into a promising future of continued growth.

In gratitude,

*Yolanda Van de Krol*

Yolanda Van de Krol  
President, Board of Directors

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Coming to Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children this past February was a huge decision after almost 24 years at Chester County OIC. How do you move on to new horizons and honor the legacy of 206 years of service? Falling back on the words of Mother Teresa – We do no great things, only small things with great love – I take heed to these wise words.

It is clear to see the resiliency of our neighbors who've been positively impacted by best-practice homeless-prevention services provided through Friends Association. As they've shared some of their stories I've learned so much, but

mostly this – there but for the grace of God go I, judging others is no remedy for trauma, and a caring word or kind action goes a long way.



As we move into our next 206 years, the challenging work continues. We'll persist in uplifting the health

of our entire community through safe and stable housing for all Chester County families, including the over 2,000 school-age children who experience homelessness each year.\* A daunting task at best, but one worth the effort. Providing a pathway to permanent housing and economic stability undergirds a strong, healthy community.

Being driven by a mission of providing service to prevent homelessness and promote the independence of families and children, we will, with your support, continue to build on our guiding principles of breaking down barriers to stable housing because ... every child deserves a home.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature of Joyce Chester in cursive script.

Joyce Chester, President and CEO

\*Statistics provided by Chester County school districts



## YOUR IMPACT IN 2024

**498**

Families Assisted

**48%**

Were Children

**12%**

Were Children < Age 5

**1,410**

Individuals Assisted

**83%**

Were Households  
of Color

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Eviction Prevention Case Resolution Program

The Eviction Prevention Case Resolution Program is a powerful tool for preventing homelessness and has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Housing Alliance for its effectiveness. Our teams of attorneys, court coordinators, and housing navigators negotiate with landlords, represent tenants at court, provide rental assistance, and where necessary, help tenants locate new, more affordable housing.

364 Households | 1,023 Individuals | 465 Children

91% of households maintained their housing

## Family Center

The Family Center is the only low-barrier family shelter in Chester County that provides housing for entire families in private apartments. This model allows families to stay together, rather than requiring dads and adolescent boys be sheltered separately. New programs, including weekly life skills and job readiness workshops, were created to meet family needs and enhance self-sufficiency.

13 Families Assisted | 46 Individuals | 27 Children

92% transitioned to permanent housing

77% secured housing subsidies

**“** Thank you for being there for me in my darkest days and helping my family like it was your own. ”

—Family Center Participant





## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS continued

### Housing Stability Case Management

The Housing Stability Case Management Program supports families currently in permanent housing with the goal of preventing homelessness. The program continues to grow, offering comprehensive support to families facing housing instability or homelessness and those recently transitioning from shelters back to permanent housing. Services include advocacy, education, resource coordination, and life skills training, all designed to empower families living in the community. Friends Association's HSCM team expands our collaboration with partner agencies, offering more resources and fostering increased independence for families.

**140 Households Served | 359 Individuals Served**

**100% of families remained housed for at least 12 months**

### NIA House

NIA House is part of the SAFE Housing Network for women who are impacted by incarceration. This safe housing program provides holistic reentry services for women returning to their community while giving them the space they need to re-establish critical bonds with their children, and secure long-term stable housing after a period of incarceration.

**5 Women Assisted | 75% transitioned to permanent housing**

**60% reunited with their children**

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS continued

## Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and ERAP Case Management

The Emergency Rental Assistance and ERAP Case Management Programs were created in response to the pandemic with funding from The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The programs provided crucial financial support to individuals and families facing a decrease in household income or financial hardship. ERAP funding has wound down, however some of our ERAP families continue to receive case management services focused on housing stability, life skills development, and landlord-tenant mediation. Families are referred to partner agencies for financial counseling to support long-term stability.

**465 Households Assisted**

**1,372 Individuals**

**661 Children**

**Rental Assistance Provided: \$3,484,374.05**

**Utilities: \$171,227.94**

**Total Assistance: \$3,655,601.99**

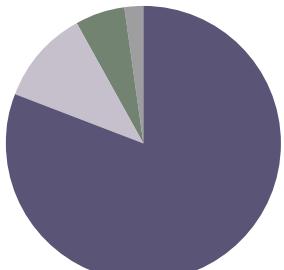
**“ I have only had good experiences working with Friends Association and feel reassured whenever you are involved with any of my tenants. ”**

**-Landlord**



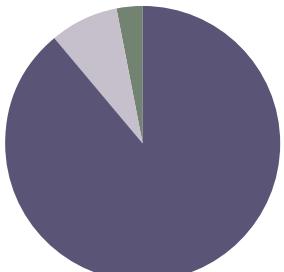
# FINANCIAL

Friends Association is able to prevent and end homelessness for Chester County families because of the generous investment of our community of donors and funding partners.



## REVENUE:

Government	81%
Foundation / Grants	11%
Individual Contributions	6%
Events	2%



## EXPENSES:

Program	89%
Administration	8%
Fundraising	3%

## TOTAL ASSETS:

4,957,925

## TOTAL LIABILITIES:

721,841

## TOTAL NET ASSETS:

4,236,084

*About \$3.7M in Revenue and Expenses were directly related to ERAP*

# MISSION

Friends Association provides programs and services that prevent homelessness and promote the independence of families with children.

## APPROACH:

- **Housing First** – Families are moved as quickly as possible to new, permanent housing, preventing the stress and trauma of multiple temporary accommodations.
- **Trauma-Informed** – Poverty and homelessness are traumatic experiences, especially for children. We incorporate trauma-informed principles into all we do, from the way we work with families to the design of our Family Center.
- **2-Generation Solutions** – We focus on the whole family, providing support to children and parents alike, to build their resilience and help break generational patterns that perpetuate poverty and homelessness.





## VOLUNTEERS

Our dedicated volunteers play a vital role in helping us expand the services we provide to families in need. From serving on our Board of Directors to lending a hand with painting and cleaning, preparing meals, and tending to our beautiful flower beds, their contributions make a lasting impact. We are deeply grateful for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission.

**“** Thank you for everything. It is all coming together! **TOGETHER** we can make the difference. Great work.”  
—Community Provider

**110** Number of Volunteers

**505** Number of Hours



**“** Lisa, thank you so much! I just got home from work and put a load of laundry in. Now I'm sitting on my new front porch. When I came out there was a sweet neighborhood cat waiting for me. I am excited now for this new beginning. Thank you for all of your help! ”

*—Nia, Resident on the first day in her new home*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Yolanda Van de Krol, President  
William T. McGrath, Vice President  
Troy Vogt, Treasurer  
Michael Hazley, Secretary

Reverend Andrew Esqueda  
Jeffrey Garret  
Holly Humphrey  
Steve E. Jarmon  
Matthew Korenoski  
Jim McFadden  
Frank Monterosso  
Stephen Nicolai  
Raef Lee  
Rebecca Louick

## STAFF

Joyce Chester  
Robin Senss  
Lori Kemps  
Tamara Fox  
Elizabeth Almodovar  
Roune Betts  
Bridget Biagiotti

Lisa Buchanan  
Urias Cole  
Myesha Corum  
Danielle Dorais  
Reilly Force  
Ellen Haines  
Makayla Hueber

Tracey Iezzi  
Nicole Johns  
Leah Johnson  
Tamara Lighty  
Angela Linden  
Maria McDowell  
Daphne Miller

Karina Olmeda  
Laurie Patton  
Marcus Sass  
Heather Smith  
Michelle Stanton  
Lauren Swift  
Michelle Torres





## WAYS TO GIVE

### ONLINE

To make a secure donation,  
visit [friendsassoc.org](http://friendsassoc.org)

### BY PHONE

Call our Development Team  
at (610) 431-3598

### BY MAIL

Friends Association  
113 W. Chestnut Street  
West Chester, PA 19380



**DONATE NOW!**



[/friendsassoc](https://www.facebook.com/friendsassoc)



[/friends.cares](https://www.instagram.com/friends.cares)

Friends Association for Care & Protection of Children is a 501c3 Nonprofit organization and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. We are grateful to all who make our work possible.