



JGHS NEWS | Winter 2023

Homelessness Awareness Day January 19, 2023

Vermonters, service providers, advocates, and caring citizens joined with unhoused and formerly unhoused people to gather on Thursday, January 19, 2023, to raise awareness about the housing crisis and renew their commitment to end homelessness in our state.



JGHS Board member Ted Marcy talks with a community member

The Addison County Housing Coalition, community partners and citizens, rallied together in Bristol, Middlebury, and Vergennes on the City/Town Greens to stand among a flag exhibit representing the number of households that are currently homeless in Addison County. Unhoused individuals were grouped by age; children 0-17, adults 18-61, and elder adults 62 and older, for a combined display of more than 200 flags.

Advocates across the State also held vigils to remember those who have died while living unhoused and to bring

renewed attention to the state's ongoing housing crisis. At the Statehouse, luminaries lined the steps and stuffed clothes that looked like sleeping humans dotted the icy walkway that cuts across the lawn.



JGHS Staff Jess Horner and Laurie Childers in Vergennes

Statehouse lawmakers also viewed a Vermont map displaying the number of people experiencing homelessness and the number of shelter beds. Another display was a sample "survival kit" that both JGHS and Charter House dispense as a last resort to people who remain unsheltered: Boots, hand warmers, hat, gloves, blanket, flashlight, two-person tent, and sleeping bag.



Charter House's Savannah Guffey in Middlebury

Vermont has the second highest per-capita rate of homelessness in the country, behind only California. Vermonters in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other temporary settings 133% compared to 2020.

Measuring Success And Improving Service

During 2022, JGHS worked with **383 people**, including:

- Shelter, housing and/or services provided to **131 people** at five properties in Vergennes, Bristol, and Middlebury. Of those 131 people, 80 were female and 51 were male. 35 were children.
- An additional **255 people** received services like food, transportation, referral to therapeutic services, outreach, and help with applications.
- Of the 131 people who received housing and/or services, **35 adults and children** received free shelter at the John Graham Shelter and two scattered sites; **93 people** lived in affordable housing at JGHS apartments or at scattered sites.
- Provided **5,710 bednights** in JGHS shelter spaces and GA (General Assistance) apartments and **more than 10,000 bednights** in JGHS apartments.
- People served included two veterans, 22 people who experienced Domestic Violence, 14 adults over 60, 11 people who have experiences chronic homelessness, 26 people with severe mental health challenges, four people with Substance Use Disorder (SUD), and 37 people with other disabilities.

Outcomes

Targeted Goals	Outcomes
75 households (150 people) receive shelter, housing, and services	82 Households, 132 People
20 households with small children who are homeless receive emergency shelter	6 households
10 families move into stable, long-term housing within six months of entering shelter	0 households
An additional 200 people receive services—food, transportation, referral to SUD and mental health disorder services, housing navigation, and housing retention	255 people
90% of shelter guests complete an Individual Service Plan (ISP) within one month of entering Shelter	100%
75% of those stably housed remain housed at the end of the year	98%

Notes on Outputs & Outcomes

Vermont had the lowest vacancy rates in the nation during the first quarter of 2022 and JGHS is still managing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both realities add barriers to Vermont agencies supporting households experiencing homelessness.

JGHS planned to increase shelter occupancy in the first quarter of 2022, but two new COVID variants led to two shelter-wide outbreaks, requiring JGHS to maintain a low shelter census for this vulnerable population by limiting the number of households per room at the JGHS shelter to one.

Additionally, guests are staying in shelter for increasingly long periods of time, for the following reasons.

1. **Vermont has the second highest per-capita rate of homelessness in the country**, behind only California. Vermonters in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other temporary settings were 2,591 in 2021, an increase of 133% when compared to 2020 numbers. When looking at changes in emergency shelter numbers only, Vermont saw a rise of 160% to 1,595 in 2021.
2. **Addison County has a vacancy rate of less than one percent (1%)**. Sheltered households with approved housing vouchers often cannot find an apartment to rent.
3. **Rental rates increased in Addison County by almost 6% in 2022** and are predominantly higher than our clients can afford.

How JGHS Measures Outcomes

In July 2021, JGHS launched an electronic health record specifically designed for behavioral health case management called **Community CareLink (CCL)**. CCL enables JGHS to collect data to enhance our evaluation process and improve program quality assurance.

CCL has empowered JGHS to standardize client records and case notes to ensure timely follow up and data collection; measure client progress toward goals; measure efficacy of service delivery and make program changes when indicated; provide accurate data to funders and key stakeholders; and improve coordination with other county and state organizations.

The JGHS Outcomes Committee meets monthly to review CCL data and reports outcomes to the board on a quarterly basis. Committee members include JGHS Board members with expertise in evaluation and assessment, as well as staff from the JGHS leadership team.

Elise & Jim Blair Fund Report

On Jim Blair's 90th birthday, April 14, 2021, the Elise & Jim Blair Fund was established at JGHS. A group of Jim and Elise's friends wanted to honor the couple for their civic engagement and community dedication. Jim, who has subsequently passed away, was a National Geographic staff photographer for 36 years. Elise, the current JGHS Vice President, is a longstanding member of the JGHS Board.

As of 12/31/22, the Fund balance was \$13,975. In January 2023, Elise Blair met with JGHS Program Director, Jess Horner, to discuss use of the Elise & Jim Blair Fund dollars. Together they decided on **supportive group therapy** for John Graham Shelter guests in 2023.

Many John Graham Shelter guests are navigating anxiety and depression resulting from past trauma. Indeed, staff at JGHS recognize that any family that has experienced homelessness has experienced trauma. For many of our shelter guests, their time at the John Graham Shelter is the first time they feel supported and safe enough to begin to heal.



Elise & Jim Blair

Thank you for your part in making the Elise & Jim Blair Fund's mental health initiative a reality. Your donations support resilience, healing, and hope.



Please help us celebrate the individuals and families we serve with your gift today!

GIVE TO JGHS: <https://www.johngrahamshelter.org/donate2>

Donate by Mail: John Graham Housing & Services, 69 Main Street, Vergennes, VT 05491-1114

Donations may be applied to:

- Elise & Jim Blair Fund (clinical services) Operations

Also, please remember John Graham Housing & Services in your estate plans.

JGHS Governing Board

Nancy Cobden, Chair
Elise Blair, LCSW, Vice Chair
Ashley Cadwell, Treasurer
May Morris, Secretary
Fritz Langrock

Mary Chapman
Sharon DeHaven
Sean Dye
Alicia Grangent

Nancy Larrow
Theodore W. Marcy, MD MPH
Chris Schembry
Will Vasiliou
Susan Whitmore, Executive Director

CONTACT US: John Graham Housing & Services
69 Main Street, Vergennes, VT 05491 • Phone: (802) 877-2677
info@johngrahamshelter.org • www.johngrahamshelter.org