



Giving Hearts, Helping Hands

OBERLIN COMMUNITY SERVICES
2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission Statement

Empower area residents through emergency assistance, food programs, and other services while promoting systemic change.

Vision Statement

A sustainable and thriving community where everyone flourishes.

Core Values

All humans have intrinsic value and deserve to share in community resources. We embrace by focusing on:

Respect and Dignity

Equity

Responsible Stewardship

Collaboration

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Marla Brewer, Resiliency Coordinator

Kathy Burns, Client Services Coordinator

Dalin Frantz/LaTressa Allgood Thompson, Office Coordinator

Rosa Gadsden, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

Hannah Gregory/Eli Butler, Asst. Food Programs Coordinator

Liv Hanson/Suzette Sanchez, Food Programs Coordinator

Jason Hawk, Communications and Development Coordinator

Jenna Stolarik, Lead Gardener



Dear members of the OCS community,

A third year of pandemic. Steep price increases in such basics as rent, food, even utility costs. The end of income earned child tax credit — a proven tool to keep families self-sufficient. The Ohio legislature cutting funding for food, school lunches, health care, and childcare for low-income families. This fiscal year could easily have felt overwhelming. **Instead, it has been exciting, fulfilling, and inspirational as we experienced the transformative impact of many giving hearts and helping hands coming together to serve our community.**

In these pages, you will read how OCS has touched many lives, offering caring support that empowers people to do more than just get by. I am honored to be a part of Giving Hearts and Helping Hands in action. The OCS board, staff, and volunteers are amazing to work with, as are the people we serve and all the wonderful, generous donors. Your kindness and generosity help us offer a hand-up, not just a handout, empowering people to break the cycle of poverty and achieve self-sufficiency. Thank you to all who have been involved.

I am thrilled to share that in one short year, the Re-Building project has come a long way thanks to you and hundreds of generous community members. We are wrapping up a major capital campaign and hard at work developing the Cooper Community Resource Center, a new community hub that will not only provide a space for our existing programs but also open doors to new possibilities and expanded services. The Cooper



Margie Longworth Flood

Center will be a place where people can find comprehensive support under one roof, from job training and educational opportunities to health care resources and food. Included in this annual report is a sneak preview of the Cooper Community Resource Center in progress; look for the full story in next year's annual report!

We are just two years into an ambitious five-year strategic plan and have already attained several goals, but there is still much to do. Did you know 72% of Lorain County residents are working poor? That is a staggering number, and one OCS wants to reduce. We are mission-driven to help change the systems that create increased need for OCS's services, that keep poor folks poor and add new people to the poverty rolls each day.

Thank you for being the driving force behind OCS's success. Together, we are helping hearts and giving hands, and together, we will continue to build a brighter future for all.

In heartfelt wonder and gratitude,

Marcie





Kathy Burns
Client Services Coordinator


Looking back on the past year, I'm not only amazed at how quickly it went by, but I also reflect on the many years and good things that have happened in our old space. The experiences brought tremendous growth in me, and our new space is giving us the opportunity to do even greater things for the community. When I think of community, I think of what we do daily to bring people together. While working a distribution one day, a woman

pulled in for food and mentioned in passing how she thought there was something wrong with her brakes. As she was pulling out, the person in the vehicle next to her heard the sound her car was making, rushed over, gave it a quick look, and knew exactly what the issue was. He told the woman what she needed and around how much it would cost, as she wrote down exactly what he was saying.

I witnessed an interaction between strangers, one helping the other. It reminded me of why we are here and the importance of the work we do. We are here to give a helping hand, but we give with our hearts.

An interaction like this was just a reminder of the importance of our jobs and being here for the greater community.





Emergency Assistance
\$198,057

"Rent increased so much. People were desperately trying to stay in their homes or find new ones."

Kathy Burns, OCS



Casework
was down 10%
to **1,015**



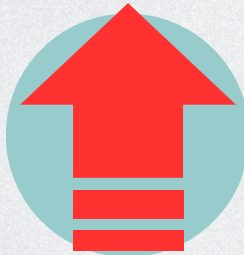
Utilities help
was down 16%
to **\$91,981**



Housing help
was up 38%
to **\$98,207**



Federal COVID relief
ended part-
way through
FY 2023



Need remains elevated
compared to
pre-COVID



13.4% of
Lorain
County
residents live
in poverty



Suzette Sanchez
Food Programs Coordinator

During my time so far at OCS, I've had the pleasure of working with a great team and meeting a lot of interesting people! My transition to OCS has been seamless and we have a good team to keep our food programs running smoothly. What is troubling, however, is the overriding trend we saw through the summer — families that used to visit a couple of times a month are now coming to our pantry weekly. **We have been working to adjust and support families struggling with the effects of inflation on the cost of**

groceries. Inflation has also presented challenges to OCS, including occasional shortages on some food items, and higher prices on food across the board.

We have been working to find creative ways to fill the gaps while also reaching more parts of the southern Lorain County community more often. This year we are adding more pop-up produce pantries because they are so desperately needed. We are also making sure to have the resources in place to keep pop-ups going all through the year.

I joined the staff just in time to prepare to move to our new building and all the opportunities it presents. That starts with more storage: space to receive more products, a far larger freezer and cooler, and more room to stock shelves for the choice pantry. It also means making our food operations so much more efficient. We are also working to improve our Phoenix Pantry at Oberlin High School. In addition, we are expanding the Oberlin Backpack program to ensure sixth-graders have enough food at home each weekend.



1,554 families
got produce
at pop-ups



8,898.5 lbs.
of food was
rescued*



15,834 lbs.
of food was
gleaned**

* This refers to food that otherwise would have been thrown out by stores, restaurants, and cafeterias. **This refers to food that farms deemed unfit to be sold to retailers, so they donated it instead.

I began this role in May after working as a food justice associate the previous year, and I am so happy to stay on with OCS! I have reinstated a twice-a-week schedule for pop-up produce pantries and created a tri-fold board with information on all our other services to reach more people. **Pop-ups are held in Oberlin and Wellington, and I hope to expand to LaGrange and Kipton.**

Since last fall, OCS has had a partnership with Steve Jones of Firefly Farms, who offered to grow food for us on his land at no cost if we can provide some helping hands. Firefly Farms became a Community Based Learning Site for students in the Oberlin College Environmental Studies Department. Students go out to the farm each week and learn about regenerative agriculture practices while helping grow food that is donated to OCS.



Eli Butler
Assistant Food Programs Coordinator



4,957 people received food

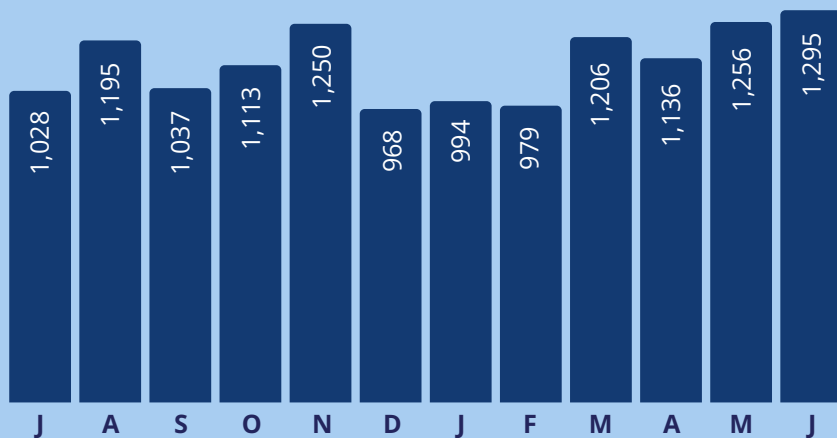


1,784 families visited



1,513 kids benefited

OCS Food Pantry Visits by Month



712 families came to OCS for the first time



881 seniors (ages 60+) received food



13,357 times people received food from OCS



Jenna Stolarik
Garden Coordinator

Over the past year at OCS, I cherished my time working with an incredible garden team, which consists of students from Oberlin College and VISTA members from AmeriCorps. Together, we were busy developing a new community garden space that reflects our shared dreams and visions. As we nurtured this project, we also cultivated strong bonds and had a great deal of fun along the way. **It's exciting to imagine how this garden space will continue to grow and benefit the community in the years to come.**

It is more than a garden that looks beautiful. It is a place where people can learn how to care for their families by growing a sustainable source of nutritious food, and to learn about the fragile state of the environment and how we can nurture nature in our own backyards.



518 pounds
of produce
harvested from
the People's Garden



196 orders
for free seeds
filled from our
catalog



Office Staff



Dalin Frantz
Office Coordinator

My time at OCS was absolutely wonderful. I grew a lot in my 18 months as office coordinator before leaving July 7, and am immensely proud to have been a part of this dedicated, compassionate team. **It has been a pleasure to serve this community, and the care our staff show for our clients and each other is truly inspiring.** I have found OCS truly lives up to its stated values. It was a hard to leave an organization that is as dedicated to its cause as OCS, and I am extremely grateful for my time here. I also know my successor, LaTressa Thompson, will do great things and I'm confident in the direction OCS is headed!

I am excited to have joined OCS just in time to help with the move to the new Cooper Community Resource Center. In my role, I answer phones, greet clients, and direct people to the various resources we offer that can help the most, which is incredibly wonderful!

The work we do is often not easy, but I've found it to be incredibly fulfilling, personally. I can't wait to see what the future holds for our team in the coming year!



LaTressa Thompson
Office Coordinator

During 20 years as a newspaper reporter and editor, I kept a mental checklist of who the helpers were. Not who was loudest. Not who had the most money. Not who was flashy or showy. I was thinking about who was always there, working hard to help people however they could, no matter what. When greedy banks caused the foreclosure crisis of the early 2000s, OCS was there. When federal furloughs threw the lives of air traffic controllers into chaos, OCS was there. When politicians made bad decisions, OCS was there. When the stock market surged yet inflation hurt people living on the edge with no investments, OCS was there. And when COVID-19 shut down the nation, pushing millions out of their jobs and leaving businesses wounded, OCS was there.



Jason Hawk
Communications and Development

So when I saw OCS needed a communications specialist, the chance to make the jump from a long and stressful career to an energetic nonprofit felt right. I found a place I could help people in a very tangible way and repay the kindness I'd felt long ago as a young boy. See, like many of our clients, I grew up in a household where food was scarce, where my parents barely scraped by on hot dogs, mac and cheese, and food stamps.

The mission now is to let other struggling families know there is help close to home. **OCS' reputation has grown in the 68 years since it was founded, but there are still many moms and dads and grandparents and seniors — especially south of the city limits, in the far rural reaches of Lorain County — that simply don't know generous hearts and hands await them here.**

Let's spread the news.



Rosa Gadsden
Volunteer and Outreach

The past year has been exciting for the Volunteer/Outreach Program! We have had many great people give their time and energy to make OCS the successful organization it is, and we couldn't get by without them. **People of all ages and backgrounds have helped us the past year and they have all seemed to enjoy themselves. With all the changes OCS is going through, they have been flexible with their commitment to accommodate us and we are extremely grateful, but we can always use more help.**

My hope is that we will be able to attract more young people to volunteer with us and eventually be able to give them a stipend for their service through our Job Experience Training Interns program. I would love to expand our JETI program to be able to provide more services for our youth workers. We currently provide financial literacy classes, resume writing, drug awareness and other support and advice on “adulting.” I would like to expand into drivers education support and more mentor pairing.



454 volunteers worked a combined **3,081.5** hours

Building Connections



One of the most powerful parts of our work is seeing people get to know one another and build connections.

Some of our produce pop-ups, for example, are held near parks or playgrounds. At one of these events, a number of young kids came to get food with their parents. They grabbed some fruit to have as a snack and, after meeting one another, immediately ran to the playground together. As they played, they shared their fruit — it was such a sweet sight that perfectly exemplified how food has the power to bring people together.

Volunteers and interns also experience these fast friendships. We get to see people of all backgrounds smiling and chatting as they work side by side toward the common goal of helping others!



Marla Brewer
Resilience Coordinator

The Resilience Coordinator position is new to OCS within this last year.

However, the idea of resiliency is not. The word resilience refers to the ability to face and overcome adversity. This principle is a foundation of what Oberlin Community Services exemplifies through service to the county. I feel honored to take on this role and look forward to future programming that will help strengthen our community, such as ongoing financial literacy videos and cooking classes! I greatly enjoy working with our Job Experience

Training Interns, building relationships, advocating, mentoring, and encouraging them as they determine their next steps in life. It is exciting to witness their growth!

In my primary role as the Rural Response Network grant community coordinator for Oberlin, I have learned a great deal about substance use disorders and how to approach the community with educational material, bring awareness, and prevent opioid overdoses with harm reduction approaches such as distributing Narcan and fentanyl test strips. **I love that we live in a supportive community that desires open conversations and promoting positive change.** I have been thanked many times by people who see the damage fentanyl is causing but are not sure how to combat it. I have also seen college students who are grateful for our work.

It feels so good to be a part of such an outstanding organization that works to improve the quality of life for its residents in multiple ways. I am grateful for the opportunity to add to the team efforts in any way I can.

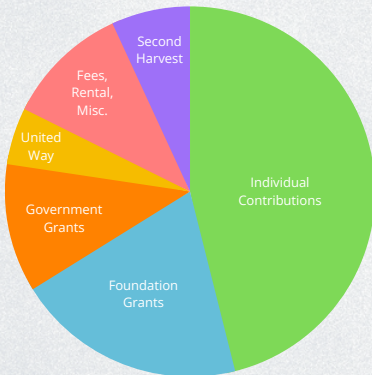
FY 2022-2023 Financial Summary

Revenue

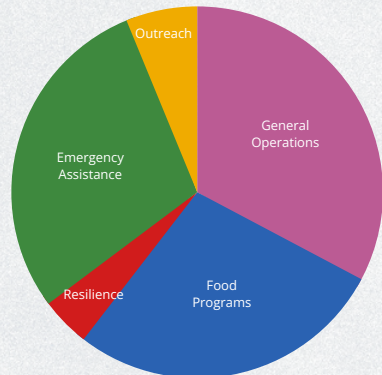
Individual Contributions	\$401,592
Foundation Grants	\$175,000
Government Grants	\$97,784
Second Harvest	\$60,000
United Way	\$43,425
Fees/Rental/Misc.	\$93,839
TOTAL	\$871,640

Expenses

General Operations	\$275,661
Emergency Assistance	\$244,250
Food Programs	\$233,299
Community Outreach	\$52,330
Resilience	\$36,160
TOTAL	\$871,640



Revenue



Expenses

*In prior years, Second Harvest grants were not reported, since that funding is held separately by Second Harvest. This year, it is included to give a better picture of food program costs.

Businesses, Clubs, Faith Groups, Foundations, and Organizations

1833 Just Transition Fund

19th Century Club

7/11

AgriNomix

Akron Children's Hospital Medical
Staff

Akron Community Foundation

Altria Group

As You Wish Travel

AVI Fresh

Barnes Nursery

Ben Franklin

The Bike Co-op

Bill Long Foundation

Burnham Orchards

Case Western Reserve University

Central Lorain County Ambulance
District

Christ Episcopal Church

City Fresh

Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Community Foundation of Lorain
County

Community West Foundation

Danielion Florist

Delta Sigma Theta Inc.

Doobie's Smoke Shop

Du Bois Project

Edgemere Elves

Erie Insurance

The Feve and ThiNi Thai

Fidelity Charity

Firefly Farms

First Church in Oberlin

First United Methodist Church

First United Methodist Women

Gardenscapes by Joanna LLC

Girl Scouts Troop 50439

Gochenour Meats & More

Grace Lutheran Church

Greenfield Farms

Herrick Memorial Library

The Hope Collection

The Hotel at Oberlin

Huntington Bank

Jerry Yoder's Farm

Kendal at Oberlin

Kendal at Oberlin Residents'
Association

Kendal Independent Living Art Studio

Keystone Pointe

LaGrange Lions Club

L.C. Deaconess & Stewardess Ministry

The LCADA Way

Legion Field Garden

Lorain County Bicycle Club

Lorain County Community Action
Agency

Lorain County Fair

Lowe's Home Improvement

MAD Factory

McConnell Meats & Farm Market
Meijer

Mercy Health Allen Hospital

Mercy Health Parish Nurses

Meyer Hatchery

Mount Zion Baptist Church

Murray Ridge Center

National Association of Letter Carriers

National Philanthropic Trust

Natural Stone Institute

Network for Good

New Russia Township Trustees

Nord Family Foundation

Nordson Corporation Foundation

Northwest Bank

Thank You, Donors!

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 Oberlin Choristers
 Oberlin City Council
 Oberlin City School District
 Oberlin Food Hub
 Oberlin Friends Meeting
 Oberlin IGA
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 Oberlin Public Library
 Oberlin Student Cooperative
 Association
 Oberlin Unitarian Universalist
 Fellowship
 Oberlin UPS Store
 Oh What Fun it is to Shop Small Market
 Park St. Seventh Day Adventist Church
 PayPal Giving Fund
 Pittsfield Community Church
 Providing Oberlin With Efficiency
 Responsibly
 Quill LLC
 Rotary Club of Oberlin
 RSF Social Finance
 Rust United Methodist Church
 Sacred Heart Church
 Second Harvest of North Central Ohio
 Smokin' Brass
 Steel Magnolia and Shontae Jackson
 Target
 TisBest Philanthropy
 Trzaska Rosen Faller
 Tyler's Farm
 United Way of Greater Lorain County
 Valley Chevrolet
 Village Market
 Welcome Nursing Home
 Wellington Women's League

OBERLIN COLLEGE AND CONSERVATORY

THANK YOU TO THE MANY
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 COLLEGE WHO CONTRIBUTE
 FUNDING AND VOLUNTEER
 HOURS TO OCS:



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 BONNER SCHOLARS

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OFFICE OF FACILITIES OPERATIONS

OFFICE OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP
 AND INVOLVEMENT

YEOMEN AND YEOWOMEN
 ATHLETES

“ Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others. ”

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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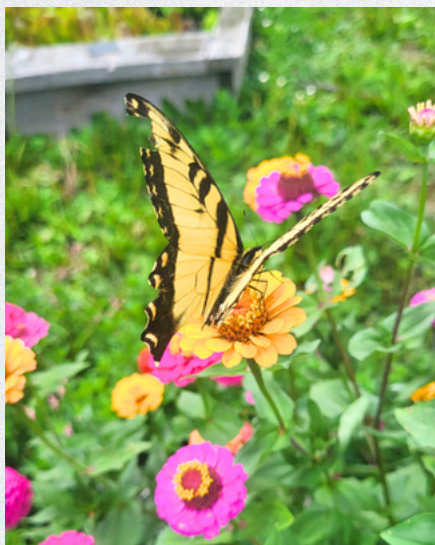


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Daniel Yeh

Nancy Yood

Dawn Yorke

Elizabeth Young

Sandra Zagarell

Grover Zinn

May Zitani

Tina and Fred Zwegat



COMING SOON

The Cooper Community Resource Center

500 E. LORAIN ST., OBERLIN

WHEN COMPLETE, THE CENTER WILL INCLUDE:
A dedicated choice pantry • Edible and native landscapes
Office space for OCS, partners, and resource providers
A large kitchen • Ample parking to eliminate long waits
A new People's Garden • Tools to get food to more people

One Giant Leap



Day by day, and with every year that passed, more families were coming to OCS looking for a helping hand and friendly smile.

By 2016, it became clear the existing building at 285 S. Professor St., Oberlin, was not going to be able to keep up with an ever-growing client base, Executive Director Margie L. Flood remembers.

"There was such an increase in people, an increase in the amount of food we were giving away," she said. "Staff and programs were growing to keep up, too, but our facility here was the same — and we knew that couldn't last forever."

When COVID hit in early 2020, it threw the world into chaos. Keeping everyone safe meant OCS also had to drastically change the

way it operated, moving to drive-up food distributions, sending volunteers home for the duration of the pandemic, and providing a staggering amount of food to a public affected by furloughs, company closures, remote school and work, and anxiety.

But the emergency also gave the OCS board an opportunity to plan for the future. For parents, for children, for business owners and minimum wage workers, for neighbors and friends, people with sudden medical bills, those wrestling with student debt or steep jumps in rent — for anyone worried that one bad day could cause long-term disaster, OCS board members decided they had a responsibility to take action.

They weighed various options for expansion.



The best option came by way of the National Association of College Stores, headquartered at 500 E. Lorain St. Responding to a changing marketplace, NACS decided to consolidate its operations under one roof and sell its office space. Seeing OCS' need, CEO Ed Schlichenmayer set the price low.

"I thought, 'This is what the next chapter of this building should be all about.' It shouldn't sit idle and be underutilized when there's a legitimate need," he told the Chronicle-Telegram.

The value was tremendous, but OCS didn't have liquid assets to make the purchase.

It did have friends, though. Oberlin residents Fran and Roger Cooper, both in their 90s, wanted

to make sure their considerable financial resources would help people in need for many years to come. Their generous gift allowed OCS to purchase a new home.

Many other wonderful donors have since joined the Coopers in investing in OCS' new home. By the time you receive this annual report, we have moved into the Cooper Community Resource Center, though renovations continue with office updates, creating a community kitchen, and replacing the roof to make solar panel installation possible and cut our electric operating costs.

Your contributions have made this incredible move possible and we are ever grateful! This special section is a start — consider it a teaser, with much more to come!

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Fran and Roger Cooper



FOR THE
INCREDIBLE
GIFT OF
\$1 MILLION
TO PURCHASE
THE NEW
FACILITY

WITH ETERNAL GRATITUDE TO OUR

Capital Campaign Donors

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**“IT'S NOT HOW MUCH WE GIVE, BUT HOW MUCH
LOVE WE PUT INTO GIVING.”**

Mother Teresa

Charlotte McGowan, a resident of Kendal at Oberlin, made headlines by riding 105 miles in a single day. The capital campaign fundraiser got the community buzzing, and generated \$17,236 in contributions. Each dollar was matched by two anonymous donors for a total of \$34,472.



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**“I HAVE FOUND THAT AMONG ITS OTHER BENEFITS,
GIVING LIBERATES THE SOUL OF THE GIVER.”**

Maya Angelou



300+

donors gave to the
capital campaign,
including many
more who
contributed to our
change drive

\$2.9

MILLION
has been
received to date

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