



**Sarah's Circle**  
Helping Women Rebuild Their Lives

*2013 Annual Report*

*Sarah's Circle is a refuge for women who are homeless or in need of a safe space. By providing housing assistance, case management, referral services, and life necessities, we encourage women to empower themselves by rebuilding emotionally and physically; realizing their unique potential.*

Sarah's Circle typically uses pseudonyms for clients featured in our materials to protect their privacy, but Jennifer (pictured here) prefers to be referred to by her real name. Jennifer feels she has been silenced throughout too much of her life. She was silenced through child abuse, human trafficking, and many years of homelessness. Despite all this, Jennifer is firm that she was never a "damsel in distress"; she used her own strength to escape and survive. She is now a resident of Sarah's Circle's permanent supportive housing program. In addition to maintaining her apartment, seeing a psychiatrist regularly, and addressing chronic, debilitating back pain, Jennifer is pursuing a long-time dream of creating a line of natural skin care products. She has been researching production methods, experimenting on a small scale with lotions and astringents, and developing a business plan. While Jennifer is still in the early stages of starting a business, she feels empowered, explaining, "I've finally become more of who I am".



## Dear Friends of Sarah's Circle,

Thank you! You have helped Sarah's Circle make amazing progress in 2013!

Our greatest accomplishment of the year was completing construction on our new building at 4838 North Sheridan Road. The building is home to ten new units of permanent supportive housing, administrative offices, and an improved Daytime Support Center.

Once our new building was complete, we renovated our old home to create a 24-hour interim housing facility more consistent with best practices in the field and the respect we have for the women served. The renovation was completed in December when a group of volunteers, both old and new, gave up one weekend to paint the walls, construct the beds, and build a safe space for our women.

Many of you have seen our transformed spaces at our ribbon cutting event in October, the Winter Walk in February, or when coming by to volunteer or donate. Whether or not you've seen the facilities first hand, we hope this annual report highlights those improvements and the possibilities for programming in our new spaces.

At the same time as our facilities were under construction and programs were moving between locations, staff and volunteers continued to provide needed services and support to help women rebuild their lives. The individual successes of the ladies at Sarah's Circle are why we are here, and we look forward to helping even more women in the coming year.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Krueger".

Judy Krueger  
President, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Ragnar".

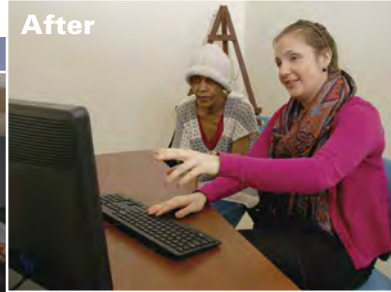
Katherine Ragnar  
Executive Director



## Daytime Support Center



Our new Daytime Support Center (above) continues to provide an open milieu setting for women to come together in a safe community, participate in educational programming, and obtain basic necessities: food, restrooms, showers, hygiene products, laundry, and more. The facility improves on the design of our old home with a larger space, improved quality of the bathrooms and kitchen, and small meeting rooms for women to work with case managers helping them with their goals.



Our longest running program, the Daytime Support Center provides a safe space, physical services, community, educational programming, and case management to any woman in need.

Women who are street homeless, doubled up with friends or family, housed but at risk of homelessness, or formerly homeless may all participate.

“Kate” is in her early 20s. She aged out of foster care and has struggled with housing instability ever since. Kate was usually able to stay with a cousin around her age, but when conflicts arose, Kate had to sleep somewhere else, which was often in a homeless shelter. Because of the unique openness of the Daytime Support Center, it didn’t matter where Kate happened to be sleeping; she could come to Sarah’s Circle during the day for services. Kate wants to work, but with a low education level and instability in her personal life, she has had difficulty keeping a job.

Kate had just begun case management when she realized she was pregnant. Kate’s case manager helped her connect with prenatal care while researching and applying to programs designed specifically for young moms and their children. Kate was accepted into one of those programs and now she has her own apartment, is enrolled in school, and is preparing for her baby. Kate is committed to giving her child more security, stability, and opportunity than she had growing up.

## Clinical Services



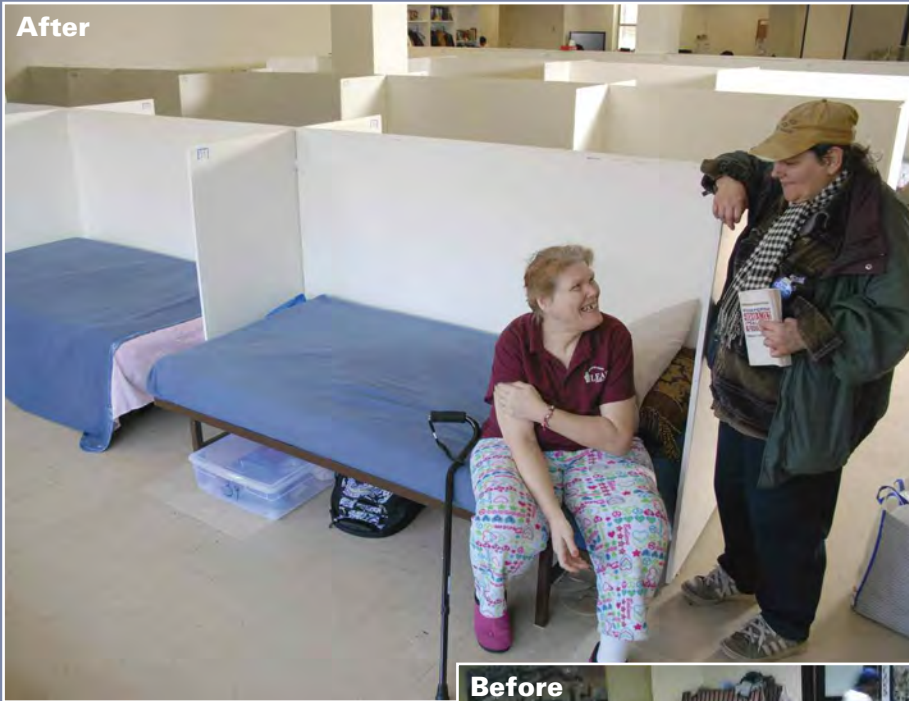
Clinical Services, including art therapy, have been an important part of Sarah's Circle's programming since 2008. Before the new building, art therapy took place in a corner of the milieu or in a repurposed storage room. The group room (above) was designed for small groups and art therapy. There is a sink, counters, and cupboards for art supplies; comfortable chairs; and lightweight tables that can easily be folded up depending on the needs of each group.

Clinical Services are provided at the Daytime Support Center to address the trauma, domestic violence, mental illness, and substance abuse which are contributors to and often a consequence of housing instability among the women served.

In order to address these issues, Sarah's Circle provides individual and group clinical counseling, including art therapy, to women in the housing and daytime programs.

When "Flora" was released from jail in 2013, she knew alcohol abuse had caused many of her problems and was determined to change, but didn't know where to start. Homeless and without anyone to turn to for help, Flora was relieved when a stranger pointed her to Sarah's Circle. Through art therapy and individual counseling, she realized why dealing with her drinking problem had always been such a challenge. She had started using alcohol to cope with childhood trauma and continued using it as an escape from the pain of domestic violence, losing custody of her children, and homelessness. Flora was able to gain a better understanding of her own reasons for using and find more constructive ways of dealing with emotional challenges. With newfound strength, Flora worked with her case manager to find a transitional housing program that would best support her personal goal of sobriety.

## Interim Housing



When Sarah's Circle took on the Interim Housing Program in November 2011, we assumed the lease for the overnight shelter in a local church basement, where women slept on simple cots (right). Once our new building was complete, we renovated our old Daytime Support Center to create a 24-hour interim housing space with real beds, dividers for privacy, and supportive services at the same location to facilitate program flexibility and greater participation in case management.

Our Interim Housing Program is a 50-bed shelter for women who are homeless. The program provides 24-hour shelter and supportive services designed to move women directly into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

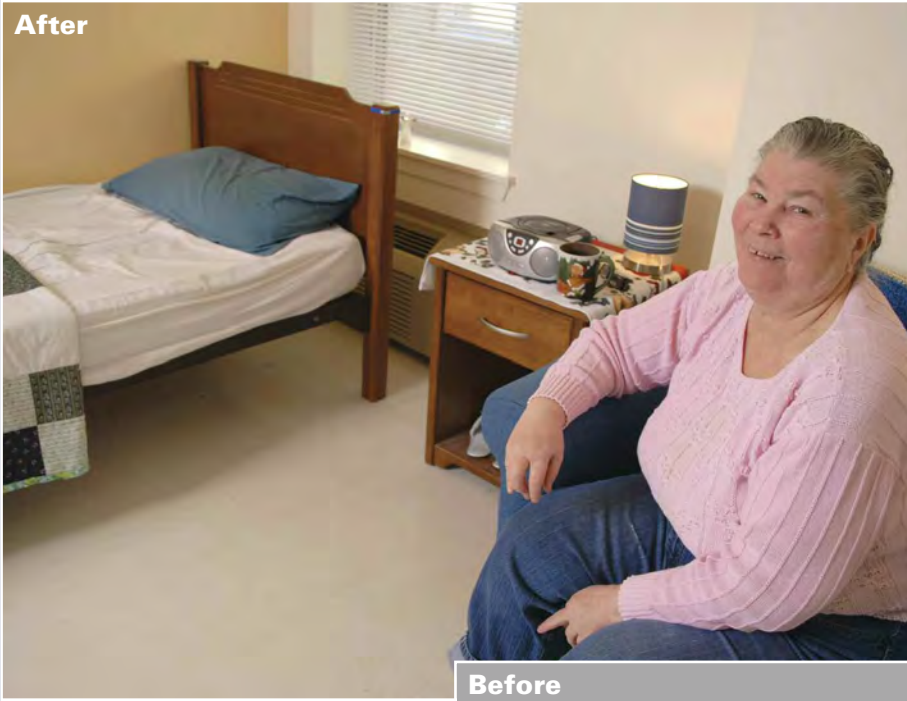
The target for length of stay is 120 days; however, Sarah's Circle operates from a harm reduction philosophy, taking in all unaccompanied women in need of shelter and continuing to work with them until they achieve their goals.

"Michelle" had struggled with housing instability and severe chronic physical health problems for several years. In the past Michelle had been in and out of healthcare and housing programs she felt didn't respect her privacy or autonomy, so she was in poor health and pessimistic about case management when she first entered our program.

Michelle's relationship with her case manager at Sarah's Circle was different. The case manager used motivational interviewing, which respects the autonomy of the client, builds on the client's strengths, evokes motivation for change from the client herself, and acknowledges a variety of options for change. After building a relationship and exploring Michelle's ambivalence, Michelle and her case manager identified a permanent housing program that would provide her with autonomy and privacy while meeting her extensive medical needs. Today Michelle is permanently housed in the program, and her health continues to improve.

## Permanent Supportive Housing

After



Before

**These apartments  
did not exist.**

In the top two floors of the new building, Sarah's Circle created ten new units of permanent supportive housing for women who have disabilities and have been chronically homeless. Each unit has its own bathroom, kitchen, and living area. For the women who moved into the apartments, years of homelessness had ended, and a new beginning started.

For the city as a whole, we've increased the amount of affordable housing available, helping address the need for more affordable housing.

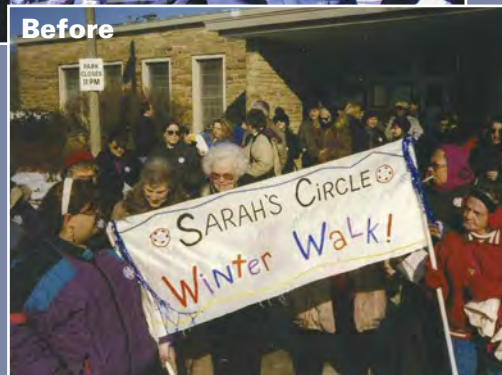
Sarah's Circle provides 21 units of permanent supportive housing to women who have a disability and have been chronically homeless.

Each woman in this program also participates in intensive case management with a Housing Coordinator at a 15:1 ratio and receives other supportive services tailored to her individualized service plan. Permanent supportive housing has been proven to improve outcomes for the most difficult to serve individuals and reduce public costs on jails, emergency rooms, and other crisis services.

"Tiffany" struggled with severe anxiety and had been homeless for years, usually spending nights in a broken down car, vulnerable to the elements. Tiffany could not believe her relief when she was given her own apartment through Sarah's Circle's permanent supportive housing program.

With housing stability, Tiffany was finally able to consistently work on goals beyond daily survival. One of Tiffany's first goals was to work with mental health professionals to get symptoms of anxiety under control. Without overwhelming anxiety, even more possibilities seemed to open up. Tiffany recently completed a job training program, and once she passes her food handler's licensing exam, Tiffany is thrilled to start a new job.

## Sarah's Circle Community



Participants and supporters of Sarah's Circle have been walking together in our Annual Winter Walk for 23 years. Many individuals and groups, such as the local Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary have been participating in the walk every year. The event raises funds for Sarah's Circle, raises awareness of the issues around women's homelessness, and brings us together as a community working to help women rebuild their lives.

Since our founding in 1979, Sarah's Circle has been an organization with deep roots in the community. Supporters share their time, skills, financial resources, and social capital with Sarah's Circle to work towards our mission.

That social capital has been crucial in gaining community approval for zoning changes needed for our facilities, increasing online fundraising from new donors for our Winter Walk, and spreading awareness about the complex causes of homelessness in our community.

Our significant growth and tremendous success in completing capital projects in the past several years was only possible with your support. With this growth, we have more staff and expanded services, but community support continues to be critical to accomplishing our mission. Private donations support our essential programs, ensure the Daytime Support Center is open to any woman in need, and help us provide services tailored to the specific needs of women. Individual volunteers present workshops, staff our front desk, serve on committees, and lead on our board. Groups as diverse as the Diversy Yacht Club, Edgebrook Lutheran Church, and Robert Morris University Volleyball team have served meals, assembled beds, painted walls, hosted program events, and raised funds. Our community is expanding with our programs, but the mission remains the same. Together we help women rebuild their lives.

# Financials

Fiscal Year 2013

July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013

## Income

Grants and Contributions	\$2,330,940
In-Kind Donations	\$608,691
Special Events (Net)	\$14,243
Interest and Dividends	\$828
Unrealized Gain on Investments	\$791
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,955,493</b>

## Expenses

Program Services:	
Housing	\$793,671
Daytime Services	\$202,535
Clinical Services	\$158,839
Total Program Services	\$1,155,045
Management and General	\$62,120
Fundraising	\$69,746
<b>Total Functional Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,286,911</b>
Change in Net Assets	\$1,668,582

## Net Assets

Beginning of Year	\$1,706,288
End of Year	\$3,374,870

Note: Agency financials from FY13 reflect a significant increase in assets. The reported surplus is primarily due to a significant agency expansion consisting of a new facility and renovated interim housing facility. These capital projects required a substantial influx of resources, cash as well as in-kind. These resources have been capitalized and will depreciate over time according to U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

In addition to cash required for the new facility, the agency received several large, one time gifts and bequests. Surplus resources were targeted for agency reserves, required to manage cash flows and maintain financial stability, given recent growth and increased government contracts. The agency continues to operate with prudent fiscal policies. Please contact Sarah's Circle with further questions regarding our financial statements.

# Donors

## Government Contracts

City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	\$497,431
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$182,212
Illinois Housing Development Authority	\$38,500
Federal Emergency Management Administration	\$12,000
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (in collaboration with AIDS Foundation of Chicago)	\$10,200

## Grants

<b>\$50,000+</b>	
Anonymous	
The Michael and Nancy Burgermeister Family Fund at the Chicago Community Trust	
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Holiday Award	

## \$20,000-\$49,999

The Crown Family
Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust
Higher Path Foundation
Polk Bros. Foundation
The Field Foundation of Illinois
VNA Foundation

## \$10,000-\$19,999

Anonymous
Avon Products Foundation
The Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation
CME Group Community Foundation
Frechette Family Foundation
Gallop Family Foundation
Helen Brach Foundation
J.Jill Compassion Fund
John R. Houlsby Foundation
Washington Square Health Foundation

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Full Circle Foundation
George M. Eisenberg Foundation For Charities
Kluth Family Foundation
Peoples Gas
Roundy's Foundation
Sara & Two C-Dogs Foundation
Thorek Memorial Foundation
U.S. Bank Foundation

## \$1,000-\$4,999

The Dewan Foundation
Rothman Family Foundation
Sulzer Family Foundation

## Religious Grants and Organizations

### \$5,000-\$20,000

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette
Kenilworth Union Church
North Shore Baptist Church and the Wilbur Warner Trust
Racine Dominican Mission Fund
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Winnetka Congregational Church

### \$1,000-\$4,999

Fourth Presbyterian Church
Northminster Presbyterian Church
Presbytery of Chicago
St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Yorkfield Presbyterian Church

### \$500-\$999

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit
St. James Parish

### \$50-\$499

Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church
Ravenswood Presbyterian Church
Sinsinawa Dominicans
Sisters of Charity, BVM
WELCA of Edgebrook Lutheran Church

## Businesses and Other Group Contributions

### \$5,000+

CBS Radio - WXRT
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### \$1,000-\$4,999

Bridgeview Bank Group
Calmoseptine
Chicago, I Love You Festival and Pylit Design Corporation
Covers for Cover and Mia Park
JP Morgan Chase Foundation
KPMG, LLP
Local Independent Charities of America
Milt's BBQ
United Airlines Foundation
Vienna Beef

### \$500-\$999

Ariel Investments
Employees of Mercer
Greater Chicago Food Depository
LiveOps
Summit Design + Build, LLC
Today's Chicago Woman Foundation
Village Bank & Trust
Women of the Western Suburbs
Zonta Club Of Evanston



**\$100-\$499**

Albany Bank & Trust Company  
 Babes With Blades Theater Company  
 CSG Systems  
 Financial Strategy Network, LLC  
 Fortune Brands Home & Security  
 Lockton Companies  
 Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School  
 Mozart and Merlot Concert at Unity  
 Lutheran Church  
 New Trier High School  
 Urbs In Horto Communications

**Individuals****10,000+**

Anonymous  
 Jessie Ewing  
 Bert and Judy Krueger  
 The Crown Goodman Family  
 Estate of Kathleen Weaver

**\$1,000-\$9,999**

Estate of Amy Brakarsh  
 Barbara Burrell  
 Robert Delaney  
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 Margaret Egan and Mike Lawler  
 Dr. Paula Gorlitz and Steven Zuckerman  
 Edward and Kathleen Halloran  
 Dr. Elise Harnois  
 Rose Houston  
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 Kara Krueger and Brian Sichi  
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 Susan Lucari  
 Betty Mack  
 Susan Noyes  
 Dawne and Don Pafford  
 Wendy Predescu  
 Joshua Reitman  
 Reginald Richardson  
 Kathleen and Louis Stauber

**\$500-\$999**

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4838 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60640-3704

**Administration Office**

773.728.1014

**Program Office**

773.728.1991

**Website**

[www.sarahs-circle.org](http://www.sarahs-circle.org)

**Email**

[kragnar@sarahs-circle.org](mailto:kragnar@sarahs-circle.org)

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