This Is Not A Home.

Sarah’s Circle

2015 ANNUAL REPORT
Homelessness is rising in Chicago and women are among those most impacted. In 2015, homelessness increased 8% in Chicago while 17% more women came to Sarah’s Circle for help. We anticipate significant challenges in the coming years due to an increased demand for our services, budget cuts from the State of Illinois, financial instability at other social service agencies, and the ongoing shortage of affordable housing in Chicago.

Yet, there is reason for hope. While Sarah’s Circle meets the immediate needs of women, our focus is on providing permanent solutions.

This past year, Sarah’s Circle created the Make It Home program. Make It Home provides one-time, immediate financial assistance needed to either prevent homelessness, or help a woman quickly move from homelessness to permanent housing. This program prevents nominal costs, such as a security deposit or move-in fee, from acting as a final barrier to permanent housing. Make It Home has also increased the rate in which women are transitioned from our Interim Housing program to permanent housing, increasing the efficiency of that program and our ability to help more women.

Another major development for Sarah’s Circle is leading the Midwest 1-in-4 Initiative. The 1-in-4 movement is part of a national effort to raise awareness and resources for the estimated 25% of the homeless population who are single adult women. We are working with leaders in Chicago to build on current best practices and coordinate specific resources to facilitate systemic changes designed to eliminate homelessness for women.

Together, we will be able to keep the momentum of our current strategies, meet the needs of women, and eliminate homelessness in our community. Thank you for your partnership.

Judy Krueger
President, Board of Directors

Katherine Ragnar
Executive Director

Sarah’s Circle is a refuge for women who are homeless or in need of a safe space. By providing life necessities, housing, case management, clinical and social services, we encourage women to empower themselves by rebuilding both emotionally and physically; realizing their unique potential.
Sarah’s Circle provided services to 853 individual women in 2015, which is a 17% increase over 2014 (730). This number is approximately two-thirds of the unaccompanied women who are homeless in Chicago.

The Women of Sarah’s Circle

100% of our clients are low-income women
54% of our clients have no source of income
100% face a shortage of affordable housing
92% are survivors of physical or sexual trauma
81% are between the ages of 31 and 61
75% are racial or ethnic minorities
46% struggle with severe & persistent mental illness
32% are survivors of domestic violence
29% are chronically homeless
28% have chronic medical conditions
25% use alcohol or substances
14% have a physical disability

The apartment I have upstairs is more than enough and, there are times when I feel as if I do not deserve it. Then I think about who would deserve it. The great answer is, you just have to be homeless to deserve it. – Diamond
Sarah's Circle has four primary programs:

The **Daytime Support Center** provides a safe space, physical human needs services, educational and general interest programming, and case management to any woman in need. Food, computers, mail service, showers, laundry, and lockers are available.

**Clinical Services**, directly and by referral, are provided to address the trauma, domestic violence, mental illness, and substance abuse that often contribute to and/or are a consequence of housing instability among the women served.

The **Interim Housing Program** is a 50-bed shelter for women who are homeless, providing 24-hour access and supportive services designed to move women directly into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Our Interim Housing program is the largest program in Chicago serving unaccompanied women who are homeless.

Sarah's Circle provides 25 units of **Permanent Supportive Housing** to women who have a disability and have been chronically homeless. Some of our clients were previously homeless for over a decade. We have recently added units specifically designated for chronically homeless female veterans.

Althea's husband had a drug habit and things grew worse and worse. Finally, he was deported and Althea was sent to jail. She was released with nowhere to go. “No money, no job, no apartment, no nothing.”

She began working with a temp agency for minimum wage, but the jobs were few. With the help of Sarah’s Circle, she found better employment and housing she could afford. She needed $500 for a security deposit. Our Make It Home program provided it.

Althea now lives in her new home with her adult daughter and her daughter’s girlfriend. They all split the rent.

“If you have will power and motivation, you can get out of any jam,” Althea says. “You just need a little bit of help sometimes— that’s what Sarah’s Circle did for me.”
Sarah’s Circle’s recent major accomplishments include:

• A commitment to continually increasing the number of women we transition from homelessness to permanent housing. Last year, 114 women found permanent housing with Sarah’s Circle’s help. We maintain the best practice standard of 85% housing retention after 12 months.

• Launching our Make It Home program that accounted for 25% of the women who were housed in 2015.

• Helping place 385 women into permanent housing since 2012. We are on track to place 200 women into permanent housing in 2016 and have set a goal to place 1,000 women into housing in five years.

• Expanding our art therapy program. Art therapy is a proven intervention for women dealing with past trauma and supports housing stability.

• Meeting the basic human needs of women coming to us for help. Last year we served over 62,000 meals.

• Building operating reserves, both for long term use and current operations to ensure financial stability. Our financial strength is required to maintain services for the most vulnerable women in Chicago.

Measures of Success

Alice broke up with her boyfriend and had nowhere to go. “He would spit on me, yell at me, and abuse me. I don’t need someone like that.” Alice was homeless and on the street for a month—then a counselor referred her to Sarah’s Circle.

Alice is working hard to afford the new apartment in Uptown that Sarah’s Circle helped her find. She is struggling, but is determined to move on positively with her life.
New Housing for Women Who Are Homeless

In response to the severe shortage of affordable housing, Sarah’s Circle has begun the planning process to develop a new facility that will include 40 units of permanent housing, as well as an improved facility for our Interim Housing program. The apartments will be designated for women with a history of homelessness, and will include the supportive services essential for long-term housing stability.

Grace had been living with her mother, whose housing was unstable. After being raped at another Chicago shelter, Grace began spending nights in emergency room waiting areas because it felt safer to her. Eventually, she found Sarah’s Circle.

Sarah’s Circle helped Grace find permanent housing for herself and her mother.

Eva worked 35 years for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and developed serious health problems as she aged. Her health forced her to leave her job and apply for disability. While she was waiting, she depleted her savings and ultimately lost her apartment. In Eva’s own words, “I never thought that it would happen to me; never thought I would be homeless.”

Case managers from Sarah’s Circle were able to help Eva find an apartment compatible with her medical needs. Today, Eva still visits Sarah’s Circle to receive the supportive services and community needed to manage her illness and remain housed.
Ways to Help

The staff and women of Sarah's Circle need your help. We have many ways you can get involved.

- Donations of cash or securities.
- Attend our fundraising events, such as Winter Walk and Beer Fest.
- Volunteers, both individuals and groups, are critical to our operations. Opportunities are available every day of the week.
- We need toiletries, bagged lunches, art supplies, and other items.

For more information, visit our web page www.sarahs-circle.org or call 773.728.1014.

Sarah’s Circle anticipates significant challenges in the coming years due to an increased demand for services coupled with budget cuts from the state of Illinois and instability at some partnering organizations. Sarah’s Circle has decreased its reliance on public funding sources, significantly expanded its fundraising to private institutions and individuals, and instituted a range of financial practices to ensure sound fiscal management and adequate operating reserves. Sarah’s Circle grew the number of individual donors by 78% from 2013 to 2015. This financial solidity will help ensure Sarah’s Circle’s capacity to meet the increased demand for its services.

For more information, visit our web page www.sarahs-circle.org or call 773.728.1014.

Financials

Fiscal Year 2015
July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015

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Note: Sarah’s Circle ended the 2015 fiscal year with an increase in net assets. The surplus is due to the strategic initiative directed by the Board of Directors to create financial reserves to maintain fiscal strength in light of public funding issues. Additionally, reserves are required for optimal maintenance of our facilities.
Government Contracts

$100,000+
City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

$10,000-$99,999
Federal Emergency Management Administration
Illinois Department of Human Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (in collaboration with AIDS Foundation of Chicago)

Religious Grants and Organizations

$5,000-$20,000
First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
Kenilworth Union Church
Racine Dominican Mission Fund
Winnetka Congregational Church
Beneficence Committee

$50-$4,999
B’Channah
Clarks of St. Viator
Crossroads Christian Church
Edgebrook Lutheran Church
Edgewater Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette
Fourth Presbyterian Church
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church
North Shore Baptist Church
Northminster Presbyterian Church
Presbytery of Chicago
Ravenswood Presbyterian Church
Sisters of Charity BVM, Chicago
St. James Parish
The Church of the Atonement
Yorkfield Presbyterian Church

Leadership Circle

$10,000+
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Judith Craven
Jessie Ewing*
Edward Goings
Oliver Gugenheim
Edward and Kathleen Halloran
Bert and Judy Krueger
William and Marta Krug*
Scott and Cynthia Paradise
Wendy Predescu
Abra Prentice

$5,000-$9,999
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$1,000-$4,999
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Martha Corcoran
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Lisa Black
Lesley and Spencer Bloch
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Cayla Aicosoa
John Anos*
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Elizabeth Black
Jeff Black
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Donors

$1,000-$4,999
Calmoseptine
Dewan Foundation
Greater Chicago Food Depository
Sulzer Family Foundation

The Escape Pod
GE Foundation
Girl Scouts Troop 23088
JLL Community Connections
Center for Student Missions
Northern Trust
Rodarm Social Club
Schultz Supply Company

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Bridgeview Bank Group
Brinshore
Centered Therapy Chicago
J. Jill Compassion Fund
McHenry Insurance Services
Motorola Mobility Foundation
Plexus Group
Schultz Supply Company
Staples
Summit Design + Build LLC
Village Bank & Trust

Grants

$50,000+
Polk Brothers Foundation

$20,000-$49,999
Al Pick, Jr. Fund
Anonymous
The Bloiwtz-Ridgeway Foundation
Crown Family Philanthropies
Frechette Family Foundation
John R. Houlby Foundation
Leo S. Guthman Fund
Pierce Family Charitable Foundation

$10,000-$19,999
Anonymous
CMG Family Community Foundation
Employees Community Fund
Of Boeing
Gallop Family Foundation
Helen Brach Foundation
Hendrickson Family Foundation
Higher Path Foundation
J. Jill Compassion Fund
Reva and David Logan Foundation
The Owens Foundation
W.P. & H.B. White Foundation

$5,000-$9,999
Dr. Scholl Foundation
George M. Eisenberg Foundation
For Charities
Mazza Foundation
People’s Gas
Rouindy’s Foundation
Sara & Two C-Dogs Foundation
The Patrick & Anna M. Cudahy Fund
U.S. Bank Foundation

$1,000-$4,999
Chicago Art Girls
Hyatt Legal Department
Illinica Health
KPMG LLP
Lake Forest Woman’s Club
Northwestern University Church
In The Chapel
The PrivateBank

$500-$999
Andies Restaurant
Boston Consulting Group, Inc
CCH a Wolters Kluwer Business
Employees of Mercer
Hitachi Consulting
JBT Corporation Matching
Louis A Weiss Memorial Hospital
Resolutions Per Minute
Zonta Club Of Evanston

$100-$499
Allstate Giving Campaign
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*indicates legacy donors, supporters who have contributed to Sarah’s Circle for 15 years or more.
Sarah’s Circle
4838 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60640-3704

Administration Office
773.728.1014

Program Office
773.728.1991

Website
www.sarahs-circle.org

Email
kragnar@sarahs-circle.org

Executive Director
Katherine Ragnar

Staff
Sarah’s Circle has a dedicated staff of 26 full-time and part-time employees. They provide case management, 24/7 program and facility coverage, behavior health services, administration, and support.

Volunteers
We are grateful to our more than 200 volunteers who staff our front desk, provide meals, host celebrations, sort donations, provide professional services, and socialize with the women of Sarah’s Circle.

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