

HOUSE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE, INC.

# 2020-21

## Annual Report



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## Message from Dr. Donna Robinson

Dear Friends,

Dr. Donna Robinson, affectionately known as Dr. D or Doc by her clients, is the founder and Executive Director of House of Divine Guidance. A licensed social worker with a PhD in Education, Dr. Robinson has a long history in child welfare, low-income housing, and family preservation. She has tirelessly served the homeless for the past 30 years most of those years providing food and shelter from her home. She remembers only to well when she was homeless. Were it not for the kindness of a family who took her in, her life may have turned out much like those of her clients.

The pandemic gave her another reminder when she lost her job after she was furloughed in April 2020. After making some tough decisions, she gave up her home to sleep on the couch of a family member who lived in a one bedroom apartment. This experience was a gentle reminder of how easily one can go from being employed and housed to unemployment and homelessness. As Dr. Robinson looks in the rear view mirror of her life, she see the experiences of unemployment, homelessness, divorce, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, depression, cancer, growing up without her parents, and trauma. She is thankful for overcoming life challenges, and she is committed even more to serving others to achieve a similar outcome. Dr. Robinson takes the same fight she used to overcome her circumstances to equip others to do the same.

House of Divine Guidance (HDG) has a heart for the homeless. Homelessness is a growing problem in the DC Metro Area. Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to help homeless women and children work towards stability. This is done through Winter Haven Emergency Shelter. Winter Haven Emergency Shelter provides HOPE for homeless women and children when all other shelters are full or they fail to meet shelter requirements. Entering our 8<sup>th</sup> year, House of Divine Guidance has housed over 900 residents, 53% children and 47% women.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Robinson".



# Three Programs = One Mission

The mission for House of Divine Guidance, Inc. (HDG) is to help homeless people rebuild their lives, by providing them with housing, physical and emotional support, to move out of homelessness, unemployment or underemployment.



## Winter Haven Emergency Shelter

Winter Haven operates December - March each year in partnership with area churches. During this reporting period, Winter Haven served 77 residents. The shelter abruptly closed in March 2020 when the church we were using was forced to close. We were unable to open Winter Haven In December 2020 because we did not have access to church facilities. Instead, we housed needed residents in hotels or Dr. Robinson's private home. In addition to providing a warm place to sleep and two hot meals, residents were helped to gain employment, stable housing, clothing, eligible benefits, counseling, and needed resources. In addition, school aged children were enrolled in school attending virtually or in person. At Winter Haven, we make it our

mission to ensure every child is in school and shelter is provided during the day when temperatures fall below freezing or when school is cancelled due to the snow. Residents receive more than shelter, they feel the LOVE of Christ. That is what sets Winter Haven apart from all other shelters. We pray with residents, encourage them, council them, hold empowerment sessions, and create a sense of family. Connections are built that go beyond staying in the shelter. Listen to a resident who benefited from the LOVE shown at Winter Haven Emergency Shelter. [Click to listen](#).



## Lighthouse Transitional Program

The Lighthouse Transitional Program provides additional supports to residents served through Winter Haven both past and present, as well as other homeless women in need. We also provide financial support for training, childcare and transportation. Professionals donate their time to provide job skills training, life skills workshops, and counseling. The Lighthouse program ran from 2016-2018. This program will relaunch in the spring of 2022.



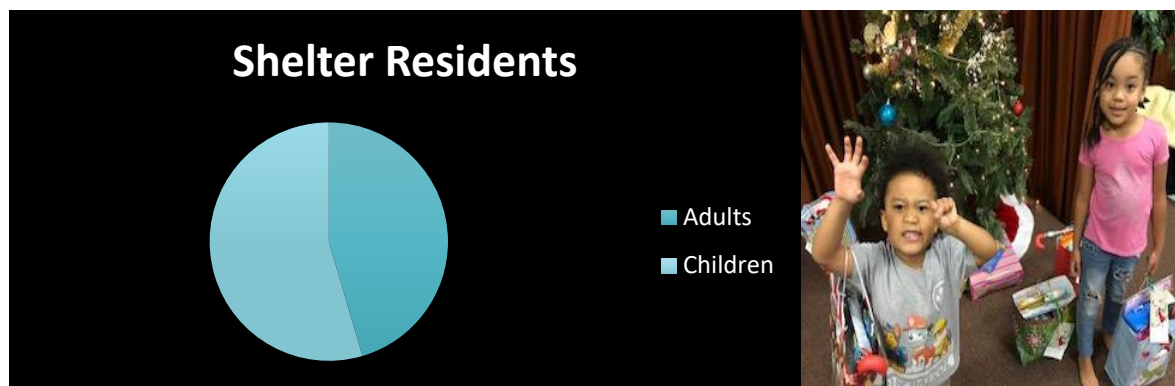
## Annual Christmas Program

Each year HDG supports the homeless through our annual "Just Like Home" Christmas luncheon and concert "For The Love Of All". Homeless throughout the county are invited to participate. No one is turned away. For Christmas, the community donates gifts. Children are served from the shelter both present and years past. Dinner is served and a concert is held for the children by recording artist, Doreen Vail. Ms. Vail enjoys sharing her talent to bring joy to the hearts of others.

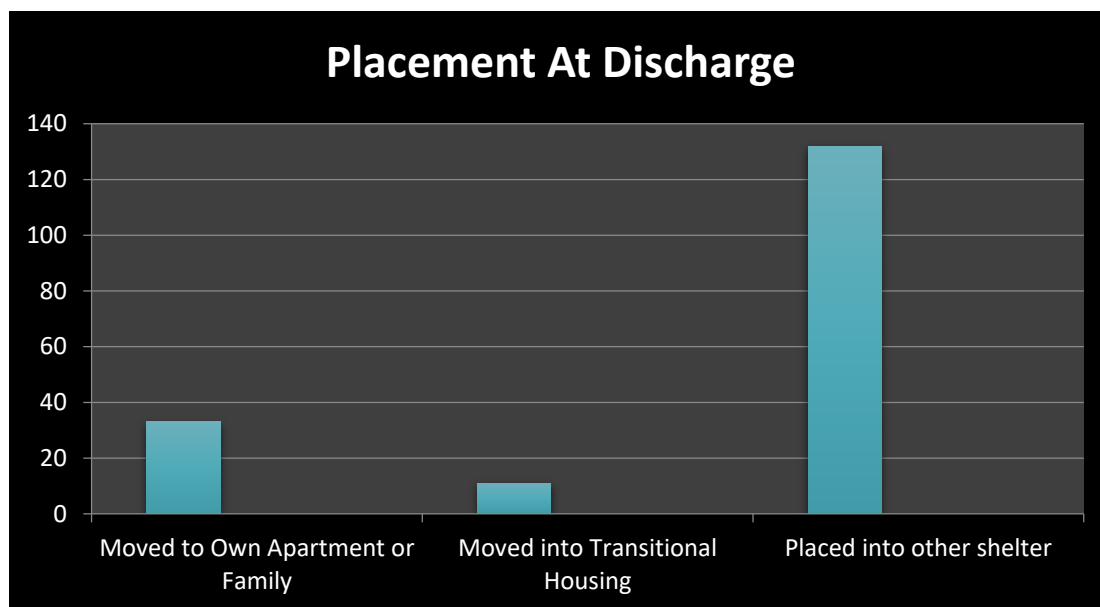
Listen to the story of a resident [\(click\)](#) who found JOY with House of Divine Guidance.



## Program Impact – (Outputs vs Outcomes)



*Shelter Residents Served 2020-21: 35 Adults & 42 Children*



Residents at discharge are placed into family shelter within the county, long-term transitional housing programs (11), with family or into their own apartments (13). Ninety percent (69) of all residents are placed at discharge.





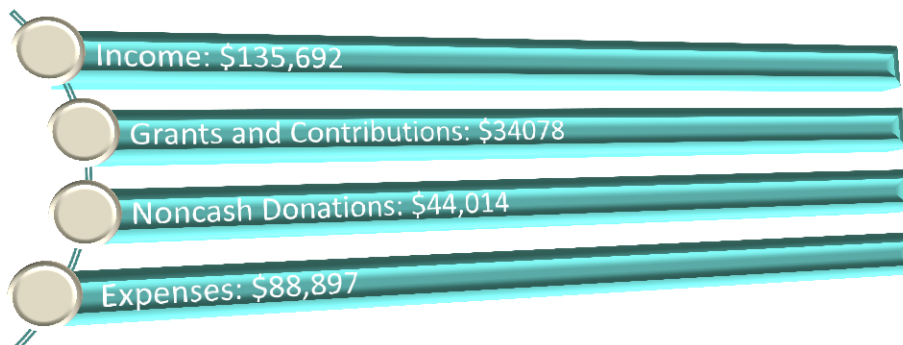
**Financial Support** House of Divine Guidance depends on the generosity of its supporters and partners to continue the services provided to homeless residents. In 2020, contributions for program support were \$135,692. This included \$44,014 of donated time and goods and a \$57,600 COVID EIDL. As of November 2021, revenue is \$242,372 much of which includes the increased EIDL in the amount of \$189,799. With the increased funds, HDG has secured a permanent

location for Winter Haven December 2021 and the Lighthouse April 2022.

Over 30 volunteers provide service throughout the year with for its many programs. In 2020-21, HDG is pleased to be awarded grants and contributions from the Nora Foundation, VersaCare Foundation, a private funder, United Methodist Cluster Churches, and annual funding from the Montgomery County Council grant.



HDG thanks its many partner churches and organizations for their financial support and service of Sligo Adventist Church, Takoma Park Adventist Church, People's Community Baptist Church, Colesville United Methodist Church, Good Hope Union United Methodist Church, Silver Spring United Methodist Church, Oak Chapel United Methodist Church, Liberty United Methodist Church, Van Buren United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference of United Methodist Church, Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church, Shiloh Food Program, Washington Adventist University, Montgomery College, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.



Program expenses were primarily offset by donations from our partners. This includes donated space for the shelter valued at \$5,500 and donated staff time valued at \$36,714. Each shift has one paid staff; the remainder staff are volunteers for the 12 weeks of the shelter.

**What's Next** In the Fall 2021, HDG has secured a permanent facility and a van to transport clients. We can run its program full day and year round. Now, we must secure funding to hire employees to staff the facility during the time it is open and for operational cost for programming to assist clients gain training and secure employment to obtain stable housing.





## We Need Your Help

House of Divine Guidance is committed to rebuilding lives one brick at a time. Every donation received goes directly to support residents we serve.

### Every Penny Matters

House of Divine Guidance (HDG) appreciates your support. Donations are used to provide services and housing to those wishing to rebuild their lives. You can support us in several ways:

- Shop Online and merchants contribute to HDG
- One time, monthly or annual financial gift
- Purchase bricks for the Lighthouse

### Non-financial

- Clothing for adults and children (preferably new)
- Perishable and nonperishable food
- Toiletry items (toothbrush, toothpaste, bar soap, shampoo, comb, brush, deodorant, etc.)
- Towels and bed linen
- Educational books, CDs, DVDs or assessments for computer, financial or other skills training

### Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

- Volunteer to provide training, workshops, or to help out in other capacities
- Volunteer to provide childcare for women while looking for work
- Volunteer to help at Winter Haven Emergency Shelter
- Volunteer to share special talents with residents
- Volunteer administrative, marketing, accounting, or fundraising expertise

- ☐ Volunteer with the Winter Haven Emergency Shelter
- ☐ Volunteer around the office with phone calls and other tasks
- ☐ Volunteer in a different way: \_\_\_\_\_

Please visit our website <http://www.houseofdivineguidance.org> to learn more, or call us at 240.888.6775. Send this form by mail to our office at 12108 Songbird Lane, Germantown, MD 20876

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Connect With Us!

(240) 888-6775 | [help@houseofdivineguidance.org](mailto:help@houseofdivineguidance.org)

