



## PEACE HOUSE COMMUNITY

1816 Portland Avenue S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-870-7263

contact@peacehousecommunity.org  
peacehousecommunity.org

# FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER



## Mission:

Peace House Community (PHC) nourishes its members' bodies and souls by providing a safe space for economically marginalized women and men. PHC enriches the lives of its members, volunteers and students by offering a place to belong for everyone who comes through its doors.

## MESSAGE FROM DAVID SCOTT, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



At the end of December, I will reach the end of my six-year term on the PHC Board of Directors. Reflecting on my time on the board, I have observed several significant changes in the makeup of the board, staff, volunteers, and the community itself during my board service.

First, the board has transitioned from one made up almost entirely of men and women who volunteered one day a week at PHC to one made up primarily of working professionals whose jobs don't allow them to spend five hours at a time at Peace House. We now have finance, health care, legal, social work and IT professionals on the board. We also have representation from the community and neighborhood we serve, including people who have the lived experience of homelessness. We no longer meet face-to-face in the Peace House library, but via Zoom on a monthly basis.

Second, Marti now has a staff of employees rather than relying on community members who face the same pressures and challenges as most of our members. Marti has the support of a group of contract employees and

volunteer professionals who assist with such tasks as grant writing, website maintenance, and seeking new sources of funding.

Third, volunteers are aging and aging out. To address this, Jana Maltby was hired to recruit and train new, younger volunteers. We will continue to seek the assistance of retirees, who historically have been the largest cadre of volunteers, but we know we have to constantly renew the pool of talent.

Fourth, the community continues to evolve as members experience growing insecurity in food, housing, and employment. The increasing number of daily visits reflects this trend. The community has become more diverse, as African and Asian immigrants who have moved into the neighborhood have heard about Peace House. Marti has been doing more outreach to the neighborhood and now serves as chair of the Ventura Village Neighborhood Association, which also raises the profile of Peace House. We want to be on good terms with our neighbors.

I have valued the time I've served on the board and look forward to continued change as PHC evolves to serve the needs of our community. My wife, Dennie, and I will continue to serve as daily volunteers as we enjoy the valued friendships we've forged with community members, staff and other volunteers.



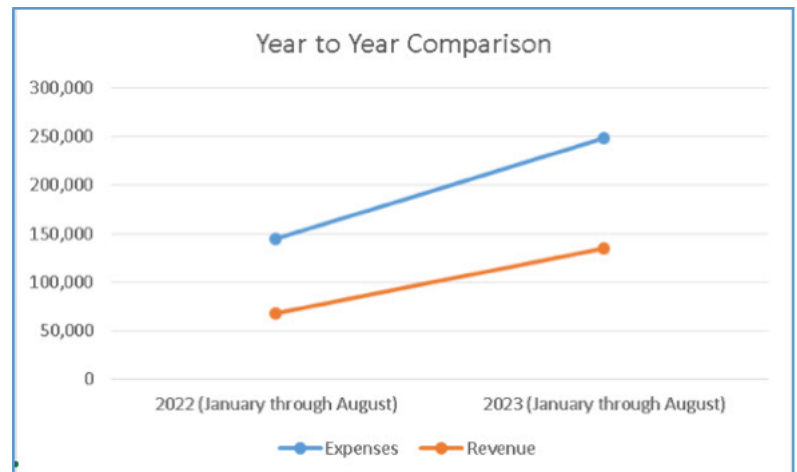
## Holiday Gift Bags are Coming!

Each December, Peace House Community gives out 200 gift bags to our community members to get them through the coldest weather. The bags include a backpack filled with warm socks, winter gloves, a hat, cough drops, hand warmers, a \$10 bus pass, lip balm, and some candy.

Please consider an extra donation at [peacehousecommunity.org/donate](https://peacehousecommunity.org/donate) to help us pay for the supplies. We need about \$5,000 to purchase everything. Thanks in advance for helping our community get through the winter!

## FINANCIAL UPDATES

Peace House Community wants to thank everyone who has been able to donate funds, or has found other ways of supporting us, during the first eight months of this year. As this chart shows, even though our revenue through the first eight months of this year has doubled compared to last year, our expenses have also (almost) doubled. This means that your continued support is essential for meeting our community members' needs, and that every dollar you give makes a huge difference to our community.



But charts can only tell part of the story. We are confident that, like last year, we will be able to balance our annual budget. Although the Ministries Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet, who have always been our largest donor, have let us know they won't be able to fund us this year, we have been awarded a grant by the Minnesota Department of Human Services for the first time in our history. This, combined with our dedicated supporters, should see us through this year.

**We want to say a special thank-you to the Sister of Saint Joseph for all their generosity to PHC's community members through the years!**

## WATCH FOR IT!

We are excited to announce that we are launching an online store of PHC merchandise. Check our website for a selection of items with our logo to help promote PHC's work!



# PEACE HOUSE COMMUNITY UPDATES

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF TWO DEAR FRIENDS OF PHC



### Virginia Mary "Gina" Webb, CSJ

Gina was a longtime and dedicated presence at PHC. She was a lover of creation, family and friends, compassionate listener, strong proponent of justice and women's leadership. Born in 1935, Gina died peacefully on September 8, 2023, at Carondelet Village in St. Paul. Rest in peace and love.



### Joe Palen

Longtime PHC supporter and volunteer Joe Palen died in August. Joe was a lifelong social justice peace activist. We will miss his placid demeanor and ability to gently calm troubled community members. RIP Joe.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO AWARD-WINNING CATHERINE MAMER!

Our very own volunteer extraordinaire Catherine Mamer recently received the Outstanding Volunteer Award for 2023 from the Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA) Metro Region Chapter. Each year, MSSA recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the health and human service field in Minnesota. Congratulations on this well-deserved tribute to Catherine's lifetime commitment to helping others.



## PHC LAUNCHES A WRITERS GROUP!

PHC Program Director Rick Mantley has organized a Writer's Group at PHC. Several community members and volunteers have expressed interest in participating in this exciting new opportunity. Volunteer Sara Ratermann Behan (<https://www.bewonderment.com/sarahratermannbeahan>) will facilitate this group. The Writers Group will meet monthly to assist community members in finding their voices through the written word.



## MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR!

PHC is thrilled and very fortunate to announce the hiring of our new Volunteer Coordinator Jana Maltby. Jana comes to us with an extensive background in social work and social justice. She has worked with many organizations that serve the same populations as PHC, including St. Anne's Place, Wayside Recovery Center, People Incorporated, and others. She has also overseen programs that rely on volunteers to function and she is an avid volunteer herself. Jana is passionate about the mission of Peace House and is excited about growing and supporting our volunteer base. Welcome Jana!

## PHC WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE GENEROUS DONORS THAT ARE HELPING US SERVE OUR COMMUNITY AND FURTHER OUR MISSION.

**The Edina Realty Foundation** of the downtown Minneapolis office of Edina Realty for their generous donation. We will use this money to replace an old single refrigerator with a commercial double-wide model so we can continue to feed our growing community.

**Quality Bicycle Products** has once again donated dozens of boxes of hand sanitizer to PHC. It's appreciated and so important for community members who often don't have access to water for hand washing. We are also able to share some of it with other social service partners.



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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As you may have heard, in late September a car went through the dining room wall of the Opportunity Center, which is a service building about three blocks from Peace House Community. Fortunately, the building didn't suffer any critical damage, and it re-opened fully within two days. For those

two days, though, PHC was busy.

Opportunity Center serves breakfast and lunch, but clients are not allowed to stay once they have finished eating. Many of their clients come to PHC for a second breakfast, and to pass the time. During the two days that the Opportunity Center was closed, we hosted almost all of their clients. On the first day, we welcomed 173 community members (a new single day record for PHC), and served 83 meals. The second day was a bit calmer, with only 149 community members visiting our building, but we served 90 meals. Apparently some of the newcomers decided our food was worth a return trip.

While we were glad that we could step into the gap when needed, we were reminded of how perilous a situation many of our community members live in. One incident can disrupt what is a fairly fragile ecosystem. When I heard about the damage to the Opportunity Center, I called Keith, the Operations Director, to find out what we (he and I and the community) were dealing with. If the Opportunity Center had closed for longer, Keith would have been willing to give us all the perishable food in the kitchen to ensure we could feed everyone. But PHC is not equipped to serve 170 people a day every day. At the same time, if PHC closed (even for a short time), those who come to PHC would struggle to find the same atmosphere and feeling of acceptance at other facilities.

This is why I say thank-you to our supporters so much. You don't just support PHC. You reinforce a safety net that is stretched to its breaking point. And when the net has broken, it has been strong enough to survive until we can recover our equilibrium. But only because of your support.

So, once again, thank-you.

*Marti Mattity*