



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

SAINT LOUISE HOUSE



A community dedicated to helping single mothers
and their children overcome homelessness.

Build. Believe. Become.



OUR MISSION:

To empower women with children
to overcome homelessness in Central Texas.

A Letter From the Executive Director, Laura Ward



Our mission is to empower women to overcome homelessness. Yet, it may be the children who live at Saint Louise House who gain the most.

Children talk about their home at Saint Louise House with wonder of the most basic things: “I have a bed,” “I feel safe,” and “I get to go to school”.

Homelessness has a profound impact on children’s health and education, as well as mothers’ abilities to find a job and stay employed. Homeless children are hungry and sick more often. They are highly anxious. They wonder if they will have a roof over their heads at night and what will happen to their families. Many homeless children struggle in school, missing days, repeating grades, and some drop out entirely. The stress of being homeless leads to chronic and acute health problems, and has a profound negative effect on a child’s development and ability to learn. This uncertainty affects more children in our city than you might think.

The women living at Saint Louise House are determined to build better futures, especially for their children. Each of their

journeys is unique, each goal and milestone exclusive, and it begins with the goodness that comes from having a place to call home.

Saint Louise House is a home where families can set goals, work together to achieve them, and kids can be kids. As we help moms with access to nutritious food, needed transportation and healthcare, we also help their children. During 2014, 85 children called Saint Louise House home. No longer feeling scared about the uncertainty of where they might sleep, these kids are busy doing all the things every mother wants for her children as they grow. They are attending school, learning, eating healthy, regular meals, getting good sleep, and following their interests. Children at Saint Louise House are playing outside on scooters and trikes; they are playing music – the bassoon, clarinet, oboe, flute, guitar and even saxophone; they are playing sports – football, basketball and tennis, they are dancing and cheerleading; they are creating art and even participating in chess club.

Perhaps most importantly, children at Saint Louise House are developing the confidence to overcome the adversity of their past, the resiliency to find joy in the present, and the courage to believe in a better future.

–Laura Ward, *Executive Director*



Now I Feel Joy And Hope: *Saint Louise House is our Family's Daily Joy and Blessing* A Saint Louise House Mother Gives Thanks

Every day at Saint Louise House feels like a blessing to our family.

From the moment I open my eyes in the morning on the soft bed and warm blankets that Saint Louise House provided to our family, to the safety I feel as I lock the door to our home at night, I feel grateful. Saint Louise House continues to contribute different gifts to help my family thrive after the abusive situation that left us homeless.

Before moving to Saint Louise House, it would have been difficult for me or my children to imagine the opportunities and joys my family now delights in daily. When our family was struggling to find a home, Saint Louise House embraced our chaos and graciously offered our family the gifts of safety, compassion and hope. If it were not for the food and transportation assistance provided to my family from Saint Louise House I would not have the

ability or power to attend my courses at school or work at my full time job. The staff at Saint Louise House work with me to find and cultivate my interests and abilities and assist me in applying to jobs and enrolling in classes. Their support has allowed our family to flourish and has presented the chance for my children to pursue their passions in music and sports. Now my children are able and interested in furthering their education because they can live without the stress of searching for their next meal or thinking about where they will sleep at night.

Saint Louise House has given my family a reason to celebrate and feel joy again. Every day my family counts its blessings, because every day we're at Saint Louise House is a gift worthy of joyfulness.

-Lucy*

*Names changed to protect privacy



Before moving to Saint Louise House, it would have been difficult for me or my children to imagine the opportunities and joys my family now delights in daily. When our family was struggling to find a home, Saint Louise House embraced our chaos and graciously offered our family the gifts of safety, compassion and hope.

Saint Louise House is empowering generations to overcome homelessness and end the cycle of poverty one family at a time.

“ Does your profession lend itself to teaching some specific skills to newly independent mothers? Please offer your services as a speaker – you will never find a more motivated audience! ”

A Letter From A Saint Louise House Volunteer



Saint Louise House first touched our hearts nearly a decade ago, when we were initially connected to this amazing organization through a Girl Scout service project.

Our earliest volunteer opportunities were to provide childcare during the moms' weekly meetings, allowing these women to focus their

full attention on the speaker and topic. Selfishly, I enjoyed supervising and improving my own daughters' babysitting skills as we played with the Saint Louise House kids side by side. The mothers were incredibly gracious, and we enjoyed getting to know these precious families. Our girls especially loved reaching out to shy, new children, and delighted watching the weekly progression as those kids gradually came out of their shells and blended in to the community. Before long, the kids would light up and greet us with running, jumping hugs! We were thrilled to see that Saint Louise House was so much more than "just" safe, affordable housing.

These hard working moms eagerly attend these meetings to learn critical skills to foster independence and good parenting – from composing a resume and interviewing for jobs, to managing finances, to healthcare and parenting skills. My second volunteer opportunity came not as a mom but as a family practice doctor, speaking to this group about everything, from vaccines to diets to treating a common cold.

Over the years, our family has volunteered at Saint Louise House in a variety of capacities, from baking homemade birthday cakes and special holiday or welcome meals, to organizing storage units, to setting up and decorating an empty apartment to welcome a new family. Anyone can get involved as an individual or through a group such as scouts or service organizations – *please share your time and talents as well as your treasure!* The best part about working with Saint Louise House is that the staff is constantly growing, evolving and always open to new ideas. Last year, our girls wanted to reach out directly to the kids, and together with a few teenage peers and the staff at Saint Louise House, they established a Children's Activity Fund for summer and after school camps.

Perhaps our favorite experience so far was the Back to School party last August. Our daughters were part of the National Charity League teens who arrived as full-on storybook and Disney Princesses to host the gathering. The children were tentative at first, but ultimately clamored for "selfie" pictures and autographs with all the characters. As two children paraded around holding Queen Elsa's cape, another grasped her hands and begged, "Do the magic! Make it snow!" My heart completely melted. Saint Louise House is indeed, "doing the magic."

Please join me in supporting this amazing philanthropy in any way you can – the rewards are limitless!

–Jill Grimes, MD *Saint Louise House volunteer*

Get Involved! Contact (512) 302-0027, or fill out an application online at saintlouiselhouse.org



A Community Helping Single Mothers and Their Children Overcome Homelessness

Founded in 2000, Saint Louise House provides deeply affordable housing and essential services to mothers and children experiencing homelessness in Austin. Saint Louise House has grown from five apartments in 2001 to two apartment complexes serving 34 families at a time.

At Saint Louise House, families are embraced and encouraged to be a part of our supportive community as they work or attend school. Saint Louise House collaborates with our families as well as our partner organizations, donors and volunteers to help single mothers with children achieve self-sufficiency and pursue safe, healthy and hope-filled futures.

Our on-site licensed social workers join with a community of volunteers and donors to make Saint Louise House **home:**

- Volunteers assist with apartment

set-up, childcare, grounds maintenance, program events, purchasing, office support, food pantry pick-up, making meals for program activity nights, our annual fundraising events, and special projects. Volunteers also provide professional services, including graphic design, legal assistance, dental services, and much more.

• **Investments** of all sizes help us continue providing housing and supportive services when single women-led families need them most. Thirty-four families currently live at Saint Louise House, yet many more are on our waiting list.

- *An investment of \$68 supports a family for a day.*
- *An investment of \$480 supports a family for a week.*
- *An investment of \$25,000 supports a family for a year.*



“Saint Louise House made me feel like I mattered. I felt like finally I have a partner. For the first time, I felt like I wasn’t alone.”

–Saint Louise House mother



“When you walk into a shelter you are broken. My life and my heart were broken into a million pieces. Saint Louise House has helped me put those pieces back together.”

–Saint Louise House alumna



WHO HOW WHAT WHERE

36 MOTHERS
and their families received housing and support services at SLH, including 85 children

WHO WE SERVE: MOTHERS

AGE 18-24	11%
AGE 25-34	25%
AGE 35-44	44%
AGE 45-54	20%

Average Age: 37 years

WHO WE SERVE: CHILDREN

AGE 0-3	10%
AGE 4-6	23%
AGE 7-10	36%
AGE 11-14	16%
AGE 15-18	15%

Average Age: 8 years

100% OF FAMILIES
have access to adequate and nutritious food

100% OF FAMILIES
receive support accessing affordable childcare

100% OF FAMILIES
receive support purchasing school supplies

100% OF FAMILIES
have access to on-site case management services, employment counseling, and life skills training.

Among countless other successes...

3 FAMILIES
achieved their goals and moved out of SLH into stable housing

4 FAMILIES
found safety and support by moving into SLH

97% OF FAMILIES
have remained safely at SLH or moved onto safe, stable housing elsewhere

97% OF MOTHERS
were working, in school, or both

100% OF CHILDREN
completed their grade level this year

AUSTIN, TEXAS

100+ VOLUNTEERS

50+ VOLUNTEER GROUPS
representing the central Texas area

contributed over **500+ HOURS A MONTH**

to ensure the families at Saint Louis House experienced the love and support of a community.

Volunteers hosted drives, planned events (including our annual Mother and Me Tea and Sips and Salsa Soirée!), delivered groceries, planted gardens, painted fences, built playgrounds and lending libraries, baked birthday cakes, tutored, and much, much more.

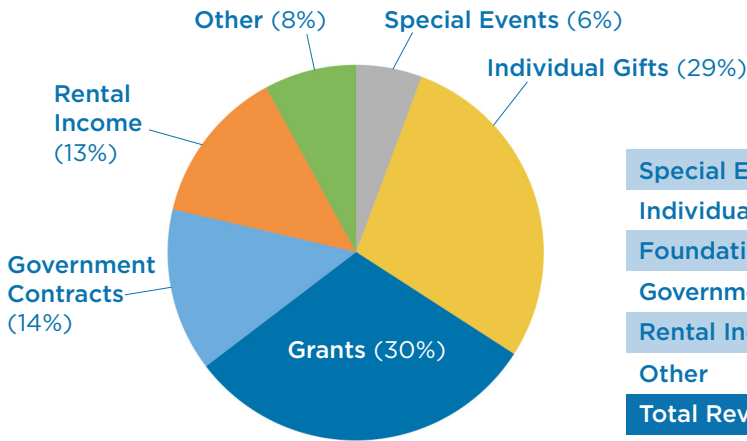
WHY? To empower women with children to overcome homelessness in central Texas

2014 Financial Report



SAINT LOUISE HOUSE
Build. Believe. Become.

REVENUES



Special Events	\$ 63,854
Individual Gifts	\$ 327,288
Foundation Grants	\$ 343,000
Government Contracts	\$ 157,700
Rental Income	\$ 150,523
Other	\$ 89,442
Total Revenue	\$ 1,131,807

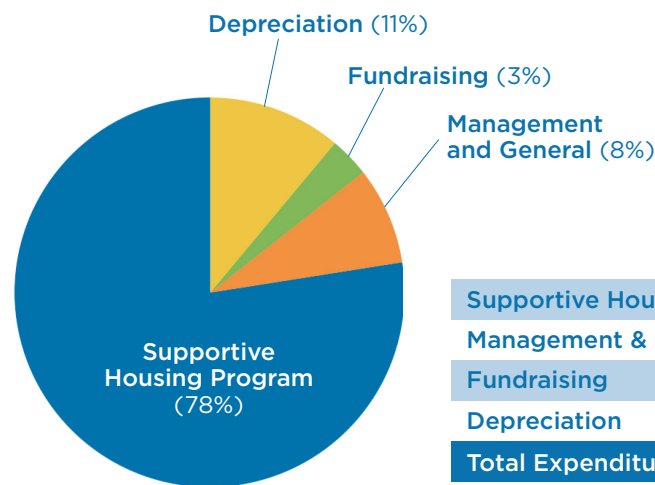


EXPENDITURES



DID YOU KNOW?

The average cost of supporting a Saint Louise House resident is \$170 per person, per week.



Supportive Housing Program	\$ 942,109
Management & General	\$ 98,812
Fundraising	\$ 40,323
Depreciation	\$ 134,395
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,215,639

2014 DONORS

*This donor list includes friends who gave gifts between January 1 and December 31, 2014. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the list, however if your name was omitted, misspelled or incorrectly listed, please accept our apologies and please notify Saint Louise House at (512) 302-0027.

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An investment in Saint Louise House is an investment in the future of a family.

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Our Program Director Shares an Update from a Saint Louise House Alumna

AN UNEXPECTED CALL *A Mother's Journey with Saint Louise House*

Last week I answered an unexpected phone call, the kind of call I rarely receive but joyously celebrate. A former Saint Louise House mom who completed the program last year and successfully moved out on her own was calling to share an update!

Jessica* let me know that since moving out, she had started a new job in a professional field and was now earning a good salary over 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. She was moving into a new, unsubsidized apartment and her daughter just completed her best year of school so far.

Although I wasn't surprised at Jessica's success, her future wasn't always so certain. Jessica's history of child abuse, domestic violence, depression, and homelessness felt overwhelming at times, but her strength and dedication to her family and her future

supported her journey at Saint Louise House: accessing counseling, attending college while working, and improving her parenting and money management skills.

Witnessing a family move out can feel like a leap of faith – growth and progress generally don't occur without challenges and struggle. Knowing that families feel empowered to move forward and achieve their goals gives me joy and confidence that they have moved on towards stability and self-sufficiency; so I don't worry when they leave, and it certainly is nice to get those unexpected calls.

–Allison Shurr, LMSW
Program Director, Saint Louise House



“Knowing that families feel empowered to move forward and achieve their goals gives me joy and confidence that they have moved on towards stability and self-sufficiency.”



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Saint Louise House was founded in 2000 to provide affordable and supportive housing for extremely low income homeless women and their children with the goal of helping families develop long-term stability.