I’m eternally grateful for all the support we have received through SMOC. It was the support my family needed to transition successfully.
-Felecia
Dear Friends,
As we continue to adapt to the changes brought about by COVID and return to a new, more normalized way of living, we are proud of how we have maintained our ability to deliver critical services to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Once again, we have scheduled COVID-19 and flu clinics at several of our office and residential locations, offering free COVID and flu vaccines to our clients, employees, and household members. We are truly grateful for the support from our community partners who help us to administer these clinics for the safety and protection of our staff and community members.

This has been an exciting year for Susan, who started at SMOC as a housing coordinator over 30 years ago as a single mother. As the first woman to take the helm of the agency, and as person of Hispanic heritage, she understands the importance of her work and her presence in a role that too few women and minorities hold.

We are really pleased with the process and outcome of our work to review and update our agency mission statement and tagline. The changes we made reaffirmed and renewed our goals to champion diversity and inclusion as we continue to provide support and services to the people in our communities.

This past year has been incredibly busy and eventful. We launched and hosted open houses for new programs; we placed over 1,400 people into housing despite the challenging housing market; we implemented a new electronic timekeeping and payroll system; we hosted a number of successful fundraising events; and we completed some significant capital improvement projects. The hard work and dedication of all of our staff as well as the support, commitment, and engagement of the Board of Directors is truly amazing. We are fortunate to be part of such a special and devoted team of people, who contribute their enthusiasm and life experience to create a culture of resilience.

In the upcoming year, we look forward to the future, reaffirmed by our work, knowing that as we encounter new challenges, we will continue to adapt and stay true to our mission to improve the lives of the diverse community of individuals and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Susan Gentili
President & CEO

and

Lawrence Scult
Chair, SMOC
Board of Directors
About Us

Communities We Serve
Western Mass, Central Mass, MetroWest, and Lowell

Who We Are
South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) works in the community to provide opportunities for enhanced self-sufficiency, the provision of a safety net when short-term and/or continuing support is needed, and to address emerging community needs.

Our Mission
South Middlesex Opportunity Council will improve equity, wellness, and quality of life for diverse individuals and families by providing advocacy, education, and a wide range of services; building a community of support and inclusion, while creating awareness to combat poverty through partnerships and coalitions with other organization.

Compassion. Equity. Community.
Our Impact

64,785 individuals served
37,487 families served

2,425 people were provided with safe & supportive emergency shelter

485 people transitioned from emergency shelter to permanent housing

$5,366,507 paid by our Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) to help 4,691 households stay warm in their homes last winter

21,414 individuals received assistance to address their housing crisis through our Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC)

610 homes received energy efficiency services through our weatherization program

$1,128,923 invested in SMOC housing renovations

More than 1,600 units of affordable housing across our service regions

1,900 individuals were provided with domestic and sexual violence counseling and prevention programs through the Voices Against Violence (VAV) program

2,126 adults and children received outpatient services from SMOC Behavioral Healthcare

5,594 individuals received nutritious meals and groceries from our meal programs at Open Pantry Community Services (OPCS) of Springfield

7,415 WIC participants received supplemental food and nutrition education

$462,671 distributed in tax refunds to 123 individuals, at no cost, through Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

854 students in Childcare/Head Start received early learning and developmental support including 45,258 nutritious meals
Agency Highlights

Revised Mission Statement, New Tagline

Every three years, our Board of Directors reviews SMOC’s agency mission statement. In March 2022, we held a series of five group discussions with staff randomly selected from across the agency to get feedback on both our mission statement and tagline. These discussion groups recommended retiring our previous tagline and also yielded five new proposed mission statements. At the conclusion of a series of meetings, we developed an amalgam of the group’s proposals. As we hoped, this process resulted in a mission statement and tagline that truly reflect the vision and values of the agency:

South Middlesex Opportunity Council will improve equity, wellness, and quality of life for diverse individuals and families by providing advocacy, education, and a wide range of services; building a community of support and inclusion, while creating awareness to combat poverty through partnerships and coalitions with other organizations.

Compassion. Equity. Community.

The James T. Cuddy Center

On June 15th, 2022, we had the privilege of naming SMOC’s headquarters at 7 Bishop Street the James T. Cuddy Center in honor of our long-time Executive Director, Jim Cuddy. The dedication ceremony commemorated Jim’s passion, dedication, and commitment when he served as Executive Director from January 1985 to June 2021. Jim led the charge to expand SMOC’s work across the state of Massachusetts and established a strong reputation as an innovative leader. During his time at the agency, Jim created a space where everyone felt valued – he had a fantastic ability to remember everyone’s name. Jim created a legacy of inclusion and compassion that we will continue.
Employee Appreciation Events

Over the summer, we held Employee Appreciation events for staff in our four main service areas: Springfield, Worcester, Lowell, and Framingham. These events presented us with the opportunity to feel a sense of community we had missed for the past two years as we grappled with challenging conditions during the pandemic. There was much fun, laughter, and great food! It was so affirming to come together and to recognize the work SMOC employees put in to improve the lives of the diverse individuals and families we serve.
**Awards**

**Employees of the Year**

**John Barry**  
Senior Residential Energy Specialist  
Energy Conservation Services

**Samuel Rivera**  
Case Manager, PDPR  
Greater Worcester Housing Connection

**Patty Rodrigues**  
Housing Coordinator  
South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corp

**Emerging Leaders of the Year**

**Frank Hoheb**  
Assistant Program Director  
Young Parent Living Program

**Fijerique Koffi**  
Housing Support Services Case Manager  
Low Threshold Housing Program

**Managers of the Year**

**Candy Hogan**  
Director of Education  
Head Start

**Walter Bachelder**  
Case Manager Supervisor  
New Beginnings

**Team of the Year**

**Transportation Team**  
Head Start/Childcare

**Volunteers of the Year**

**Sister Anna Muhammad**  
Springfield

**Irene Masson**  
Lowell

**Cathy Miles**  
MetroWest

**Steven Schnitzer**  
Worcester

**Spirit of SMOC**

**Margaret Davitt Award**

**Leslie Lee**

**Community Partners**

**NETSCOUT**  
Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST)

**Friend of SMOC**

**Annie Bradford Award**

**Spanish American Center Inc.**

**Board Member of the Year**

**Frederick Rubin Award**

**John Ellsworth**
Energy & Financial Assistance

This Division provides financial assistance services, including Home Energy Assistance, Weatherization, Rental Assistance, and the Housing Consumer Education Center to assist households in maintaining safe and stable housing.

Program List

• Energy Conservation
• Family Self Sufficiency Program
• Green Jobs Academy (GJA)
• Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC)
• Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
• Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP)
• Rental Assistance Program
• SMOC Financial Services
• Utilities: Appliance Program
• Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

VITA Tax Prep

SMOC was pleased to partner with Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and AARP to offer FREE Tax Preparation services at our headquarters in Framingham. IRS-certified volunteers provided free tax preparation services to 123 qualifying community members from February 15th - April 15th, 2022.
Energy & Financial Assistance

Green Jobs Academy, located in Marlborough, was established to create career opportunities in the growing field of weatherization and energy conservation.

“A fantastic class with two great teachers.”

“It’s a good class and good thing to learn.”

“It was very well done. I learned some new things for my job. The instructors were great, informative, and easy to work with.”

“Really detailed and thorough class, teachers went through everything.”

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

$462,671 distributed in tax refunds to 123 individuals, at no cost, through (VITA)

610 homes received energy efficiency services through our weatherization program

$5,366,507 paid by our HEAP to help 4,691 households stay warm in their homes last winter
Regional Services

Regional Services provide safe and secure emergency and permanent housing as well as supportive services and connections to community resources in SMOC’s four main service areas: Metrowest, Central Massachusetts, Western Massachusetts, and Lowell.

Program List

- Common Ground Resource Center
- Community Kiln at Brick Stack Arts Center
- Framingham Community Center
- Greater Worcester Housing Connection
- Housing Opportunities for People with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA)
- Joan Brack Adult Learning Center
- Low-Threshold Supportive Housing
- Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC)
- MetroWest Emergency Single Adult Shelter Program
- Mobile Stabilization Team
- New Beginnings Housing Program
- Open Pantry Community Services
- Rapid Transition of Individuals (RTI)
- Supportive Case Management

OPCS Easter Extravaganza

On April 17th, 2022, Open Pantry Community Services (OPCS) hosted an Easter Meal to celebrate the holiday at Commerce High School in Springfield. Approximately 350 meals were served, and dinners were provided to home-bound and handicapped individuals as well.

Earth Day Clean Up

In support of our good neighbor initiative, SMOC staff in our various regions participate in community cleanup activities throughout the year. On April 21st, SMOC staff picked up trash from five different sites around the Downtown Framingham area to celebrate Earth Day and as part of Keep Framingham Beautiful’s Great Framingham Cleanup event.
Regional Services

New Housing in Lowell

This year, SMOC acquired two properties in Lowell that are now being renovated into permanent supportive housing for 30 individuals.

Zach Packs + GWHC = Success

Zachary Schnitzer was employed with SMOC at the Greater Worcester Housing Connection through July 2021, when he unexpectedly passed away. Zach was compassionate and kind with the people he encountered during his time at SMOC. His father, Steve Schnitzer, contacted GWHC in the hopes that we would join forces with The Zach Pack Cares organization he created to honor his son. Through the Zach Pack Cares donation of toiletries and socks, the Greater Worcester Housing Connection came together to package and distribute 125 bags between the residents of the shelter and the outreach team working in the community. Thank you to The Zach Packs Care for their work and collaboration!

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

1,587 individuals were provided with safe & supportive emergency shelter

163 individuals transitioned from emergency shelter to permanent housing

5,594 individuals received nutritious meals & groceries from our meal programs at OPCS
Early Education

Early Education provides quality full-day, full-year, and after-school learning; nutrition; and care to children from infancy to fourteen years-old.

Program List

- Childcare
- Head Start

Early Education & Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund

Over the last two years, SMOC has received funding from the Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund, administered by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in collaboration with the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) and the Children’s Investment Fund (CIF).

Most recently, SMOC was awarded funding to create a new, accessible primary entrance at our Framingham Head Start and Childcare facility, as well as to add two all-gender hands-free restrooms. This project has increased accessibility into the facility and enhanced security.
Early Education

Summer Step Up

Administered by United Way of Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), SMOC’s summer learning program in Framingham, Summer Step Up, was able to offer several scholarships to children entering pre-kindergarten through second grade this year. Summer Step Up was launched to accelerate learning during the critical summer months for children who have had limited access to in-person learning due to COVID-19. These summer experiences helped prepare young students in the critical early years of learning and development to transition back to school with a solid foundation.

Mini Walnuts

The Mini Walnuts program is a collaboration between the Walnut Hill School for the Arts (WHS) and SMOC’s Framingham Community Center that introduces ballet, music, and movement to children in SMOC’s childcare programs. Mini Walnuts offers professional-grade classes, free of charge, in two eight-week sessions and one six-week session per year. Through Mini Walnuts, SMOC childcare students from low-income households have the vital opportunity to engage their minds and bodies in ways that encourage self-expression.

Impact Snapshot

854

students in Childcare/Head Start received early learning and development support including 45,258 nutritious meals
**Family Services**

*Family Services programs provide a critical safety net with a focus on housing stabilization and linkages to community-based resources.*

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**Program List**

- Family Emergency Shelters
  - Congregate
  - Scattered Sites
  - Young Parent Living Program
- HomeBASE
- Voices Against Violence (VAV)
  Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Workforce Development
  - CIES
  - Secure Jobs
  - SNAP

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**Young Parent Living Program**

Every two years, the Open Pantry Young Parent Living Program (YPLP) is evaluated by its funders, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care. This year, despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, YLPL achieved a perfect score in all facets of the evaluation. Congratulations to the YLPL program staff for their hard work and dedication to exceptional programming!

---

**5K Benefits Medway House**

On Saturday, August 27th, 2022, Medway Community Church held its 3rd Annual Reach Out and Run 5K Run/Walk, with 50% of its proceeds supporting Medway House. This walk raised critical funds to support Medway House’s shelter operations, which include providing access to medical care, education, skills training, employment opportunities, and housing searches for residents to achieve self-sufficiency. We are grateful for the continued support from Medway Community Church!
Every two years, the Open Pantry Young Parent Living Program (YPLP) is evaluated by its funders, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care. This year, despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, YLPL achieved a perfect score in all facets of the evaluation. Congratulations to the YLPL program staff for their hard work and dedication to exceptional programing!

1,900 individuals were provided with domestic & sexual violence counseling and prevention programs from VAV

255 families were provided with safe & supportive emergency shelter

For as long as she can remember, Shaira’s mom has worked at WIC (Women, Infants, Children) in Framingham. When Shaira became a mother herself, she knew she wanted to exclusively breastfeed, but it proved to be quite difficult.

Through WIC, Shaira was connected to an IBCLC (International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant) and embarked on research to help her be successful with exclusively breastfeeding her two children. The experience piqued her interest in the role of lactation support, and Shaira became a breastfeeding peer counselor, first at the Southbridge WIC location and now at the Worcester WIC office, where she recently celebrated her five-year work anniversary!

Reflecting on her own journey, “I had moments I wanted to give up, but I had amazing support at the Framingham WIC office to get me to my 6-month goal. Then I made it to one year...and kept going!”

Shaira’s Story

IMPACT SNAPSHOT
SMOC Behavioral Healthcare

SMOC Behavioral Healthcare (SBH) services and programs provide substance use and mental health outpatient services to individuals, children, and families. In addition, SBH provides residential substance use recovery and peer recovery services.

Program List
- Anchored in Recovery Support Center
- Behavioral Health Partners of MetroWest
- Child and Family Behavioral Healthcare
- Driver Adult Education/Driving Under Influence
- Family Residential Substance Use Treatment
  - Sage House
- Flexible Services
- Mental Health/Substance Use Outpatient Clinics
- Recovery Coach Program
- Women’s Residential Substance Use Treatment
  - Rhodes House
  - Serenity House
  - Co-Occurring Enhanced (COE) House

Supportive Housing

The Home and Healthy for Good program served 181 chronically homeless individuals across MetroWest, Worcester County, and Lowell! Our supportive housing retention rate remains well above 90%.

Capital Improvement - Sage House

In 2022, Sage House installed a new ramp for the handicap accessible entrance, as well as new furniture for each of the common room areas. Funded by the Reliant Foundation, the new ramp has made it easier to maneuver and enter the property. The new common area spaces now allow for increased socialization, communal meals, and the opportunity to gather for movie and game nights.
Anchored in Recovery Open House

City leaders, state officials, and SMOC’s CEO Susan Gentili were among the crowd that attended SMOC’s Anchored in Recovery program on Wednesday, March 23rd, 2022. Anchored in Recovery, located in a beautiful facility in downtown Framingham, offers peer-to-peer recovery support services in a place where our recovery community can grow within a supportive, safe, and judgment-free environment. We are grateful to have this important resource available in the City of Framingham.

Andrea’s Story

At her initial meeting with SMOC, Andrea was working through mental health and substance use issues as well as going through heartbreak. Through the Behavioral Health Community Partners (BHCP) program SMOC staff assisted Andrea by scheduling appointments with her medical and behavioral health providers. Her Case Manager and Care Coordinator worked together to ensure a smooth transition from living at a shelter to being housed. Andrea is now enjoying the accomplishments of reuniting with her family, getting back to work, and obtaining a car. In addition, Andrea has established good relationships with her health and mental health providers and continues to work with her Case Manager and Care Coordinator on her goals and future plans.

Andrea states that she feels optimistic about the future, and is very grateful to her care team with BHCP as well as the entire team at SMOC. She loves spending time with her daughter and grandchildren, and is very thankful to be sober and able to have a good relationship with her family.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

2,126 adults and children received outpatient services from SMOC Behavioral Healthcare

254 people served in residential treatment programs
Billy’s Story

Billy moved into Hastings Hall, one of SMNPHC’s housing locations in Fitchburg, a little over a year ago.

During his time at Hastings Hall, Billy would often reach out to new tenants to show them around the building and make them feel welcomed. Billy knows the Fitchburg area well, having grown up in the city, and would provide folks with names and contact numbers for food banks, therapists, transportation, and churches. He was forever thanking SMOC for “giving him a chance at housing.”

As we grew closer to the grand opening of a new SMNPHC property at 94 Highland Avenue earlier this year, our property management team identified Billy as an ideal house manager. Billy has worked hard on his sobriety and continues to help others who may be struggling with theirs; he does this without judgement. He has always shown a willingness to help, compassion for others, and his overall leadership within the home.

Billy also works at a local grocery store. He can be seen walking to work with his name tag, freshly ironed dress pants and tie; he takes pride in his job and they love him there. At SMNPHC, we rely on our house managers to lead by example and to make sure that the home is safe for all that live there. Billy has been an exemplary house manager and we are fortunate to have him.
Highland Avenue Ribbon Cutting

On May 12th, 2022, SMOC held a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of our supportive housing property located at 94 Highland Avenue in Fitchburg. This newly-renovated, fully ADA-accessible property will provide low-barrier, affordable permanent housing and supportive services for up to 14 individuals experiencing homelessness while they are on their way to self-sufficiency. We are grateful for the continued support from the community, MassHousing, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, the City of Fitchburg, and State Senator John Cronin.

Pearl Street Capital Improvements

Pearl Street Family Shelter, a congregate emergency family shelter located in MetroWest, underwent a series of improvements over the last year. Pearl Street is able to serve up to 12 families experiencing homelessness at any one time, providing shelter, case management and referrals, permanent housing search and placement, and ongoing support to help families secure permanent, sustainable housing. The recent renovations included a new boiler, new exterior doors, window replacements, new siding and fencing, repaving the driveway, and other exterior and landscaping upgrades. Funded in part by Charlesbank Homes Foundation and Avidia Bank Foundation, these investments help ensure that both current and future families have a comfortable and stable place to call home as they seek more permanent housing.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

$1,128,923 invested in SMOC housing renovations

More than 1,600 Units of Affordable Housing across our service regions
Financial Summary
Fiscal Year Ended June 30th, 2022

Changes in Net Assets Before Depreciation $5,607,000
Depreciation $3,872,000
Changes in Net Assets $1,735,000

Revenue
Grants & Contracts $132,073,000
Third Party Billing $8,832,000
Rental Income $11,244,000
In-Kind Revenue $1,019,000
Donations & Other $10,421,000
Total Revenue $163,589,000

Expenses
Energy & Financial Assistance $57,882,000
Housing $12,437,000
Head Start/Childcare $16,155,000
Behavioral Healthcare $8,831,000
Regional Services, Family Services, and Other $58,608,000
Admin & Fundraising $4,069,000
Total Expenses $157,982,000
THANK YOU TO OUR MUNICIPAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL FUNDERS

City of Framingham
City of Lowell
City of Springfield
City of Worcester
Town of Northbridge
Division of Banks
MA Department of Children & Families
MA Department of Corrections
MA Department of Early Education & Care
MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Development
MA Department of Housing & Community Development
MA Department of Mental Health
MA Department of Public Health
MA Department of Transitional Assistance
MA Executive Office of Health & Human Services
MA Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development

MA Medicaid
MA Medicare
MA Office for Victim Assistance
MA Parole Board
MA Rehabilitation Commission
Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
Without our donors, the work that we do would be impossible. Thank you to the many institutional and individual donors who supported SMOC in FY22. Please scan the QR code for our FY22 donor lists!

Thank you to our donors!

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www.ltlc.org

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www.openpantry.org

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