



**SOS**  
community  
services

# *Home is where the heart is.*

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016



*Together we have...*



**Housed 75 families**  
(300 Parents and Children)



**Responded to  
32,705 food requests**



**Offered more than 1,000  
people transportation  
and utility assistance,  
baby food and diapers**



**Served 176  
children and youth**

## Message from Leadership

Dear Friends,

In 2015, SOS celebrated 45 years of service to the community. And we celebrated the best way possible, by housing and feeding more people than ever! With new program models—Rapid Re-Housing and the Choice Pantry—**we ended homelessness and hunger for the largest number of people in a single year in SOS's history.**

During the last year, SOS also:

**Started a new program that will help tenants** with housing choice vouchers who reside in Ann Arbor Commission's housing units with grievance procedures, paperwork, and utility resources to help them maintain housing.

**Reintroduced the Parents as Teachers program,** which helps parents of young children use play-based activities to promote healthy child development. Parents are also connected to resources such as education, job-training, and recreation.

**Expanded access to the Choice Food Pantry** in response to a 33% increase in requests for food. With help from the Ypsilanti Area Community Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation and Food Gatherers, families can access SOS's food pantry up to twelve times per year, rather than the previous six.

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## OUR MISSION

**SOS promotes housing stability and family self-sufficiency through collaboration, care and respect.**

Due to shifts in federal funding, SOS's budget has decreased by 60% in the past two years. You might wonder, how have we been able to upsize our impact with fewer dollars and fewer staff?

**The answer is simple. It's because of you.**

When you show up to unload the food truck, donate gifts for a family at the holidays, or organize a class project about SOS, you are making sure SOS is there to help whenever a local family has a need. Our success depends on you.

We are proud to share with you this annual report, which will help you learn more about the impact you are making in the community by supporting SOS. We look forward to working with you again this year to end homelessness and hunger for our neighbors here in Washtenaw County.

Best wishes,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhonda Weathers".

**Rhonda Weathers**  
Executive Director

## Celebrating 45 Years of Service

In 2015, SOS celebrated its 45th Anniversary as a non-profit. In 1970 SOS was an organization formed by students and faculty at Eastern Michigan University. The acronym "SOS" stood for Students Offering Support. They used a peer-support model to address drug-related conflicts, and for meeting the most pressing community needs of housing, food, and connection to other resources.



It all started in the blue octagon house! In 1973, SOS moved to the historical home to support community members in need.

# Our Impact

## HOUSING SERVICES

### SHELTER

24 families served with 36 adults and 87 children.

96% exited to permanent housing

### RAPID RE-HOUSING

72 families served with 92 adults and 209 children.

88% exited to permanent housing

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

176 children and youth served in Parents as Teachers, after school, and summer programming.

## PUBLIC HOUSING SUPPORTS

### ROSS PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

25 Ypsilanti Housing Commission families accessed educational programs, increased their income, and connected to other community resources.

5 people found work through the Job Developers Alliance Job Fair.

1 child earned a full scholarship to the University of Michigan.

## VOLUNTEERS

262 volunteers worked 9,894 hours, a contribution of time valued at \$164,408.

## RESOURCE CENTER

### WALK-IN SERVICES

1,032 people provided with transportation and utility assistance, baby food and diapers.

1,320 bus tokens distributed.

52 Fare Deal bus card applications processed.

106 households assisted with utilities.

### FOOD PANTRY

32,705 requests for food answered.

3,485 households visited the Choice Pantry.

328,408 pounds of food distributed.

# Spotlight



Tazjianna has participated in SOS's ROSS and children's program for the last three years. She won the 2015 calendar art contest for the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

When Tazjianna was asked what homes means to her, she said, "Home is where the heart is. It's where my mom, two brothers, cousin, stepdad, and I live. When I walk in from a friend's or family's house, I think, feel, and see love. I see family running up to hug me and I feel safe and secure. I know I'm home because I feel complete."

This year she learned that when she graduates high school, she'll receive a scholarship from the University of Michigan.

**Tazjianna**  
**11 years old**

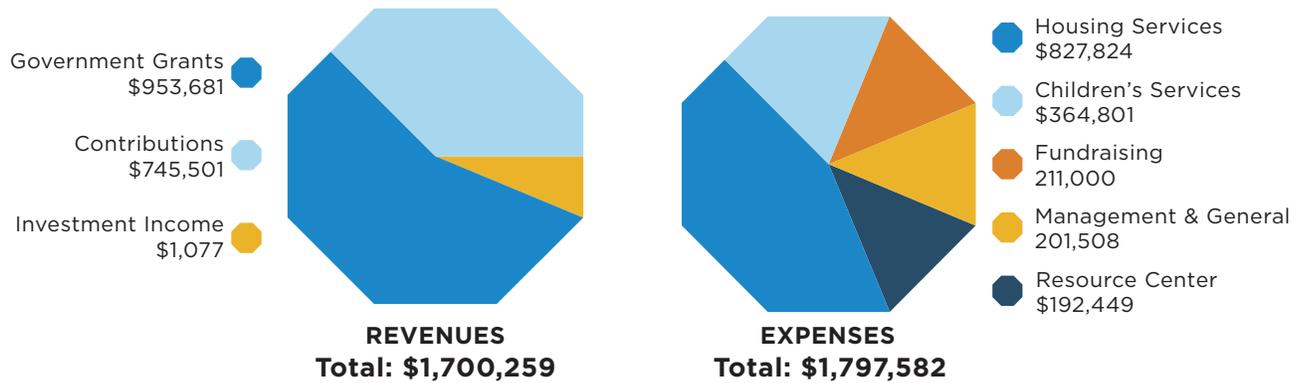


SOS established itself as a leading nonprofit, mobilizing supporters and volunteers. In 1985, the organization provided leadership for the "Washtenaw Affordable Housing Initiative" to engage the community in responding to the growing homeless population.

By the mid-1990s, SOS offered shelter and transitional housing, along with programs for homeless children. In addition, the organization provided vital services like food and other assistance to help families remain housed.

Today SOS continues to respond to the needs of the community by providing housing for families, supports to prevent eviction and increase employment, and children's programs.

## Financials



## How To Get Involved



### Give Funds

We can't provide families with housing and the help they need without your support. Consider making a donation to support SOS. Go to [www.soscs.org](http://www.soscs.org) to give today!



### Host A Drive

The families we serve need household items, food, and personal care items throughout the year. Start collecting needed items at school, the office, or another community gathering place.



### Volunteer

Our volunteers are at the heart of what we do. We need people to serve in our office, help at our events, and lend a hand at our food pantry.

## Contact

Service Location:  
SOS Resource Center  
114 N River St  
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Email: [info@soscs.org](mailto:info@soscs.org)  
Phone: (734) 485-8730  
Fax: (734) 485-8739  
[www.soscs.org](http://www.soscs.org)

Mail to:  
SOS Administrative Office  
101 S Huron St  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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