



Greetings!

Dear Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach Community,

Welcome to our 2023 Year in Review, which includes information about Strategic Plan 2025, a plan that we are thrilled to witness spring to life (details on page 2). The most important initiative is our collective commitment to intentional liberation from racism and discrimination for justice-involved individuals. We are especially dedicated to addressing the disproportionate representation of Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, the LGBTQ+ community, and those affected by mental illness or substance use disorders in the criminal justice system. Our outreach initiatives are reaching a more diverse population, exemplified by the thriving groups in the Monroe County Jail under the exceptional leadership of Jon Olsen, Luther Knight, and DeShawn McLamore. With about 12 men and 8 women attending weekly groups, the transition to Nielsen House and Jennifer House is marked by the warm embrace of familiar faces.

I am excited to report that our resident population is more diverse than ever, a trend set to grow with our deliberate commitment. We are actively tracking statistics to measure our progress. Our staff composition aligns with our strategic plan, as evidenced by the intentional hiring and retention of a diverse team that is representative of those we currently, or plan to, provide services to.

Furthermore, our Equity Leadership Team (ELT) is actively fostering equality and race conversations among SCPO staff through regular training and discussions at staff meetings. It is heartening to see our commitment in action. We are empowering younger leaders by consulting with them on the new Executive Support Team. We created an MOU with Trillium Health, provide our residents with trauma-informed healthcare. We are so grateful to every person, organization, group, and volunteer who understands the value of our work.

Looking back on the last 43+ years, I am delighted with the resources we are able to offer individuals that we work with and the growth that we've seen (see page 6). It is one of the great joys of my life to be part of this work, history, and legacy.

This short report shares some of the exciting things that have happened over the past year or so, including program outcomes, updates, and good news. Thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Jim Smith, Executive Director

Elizabeth Martinez, Operations Administrator



“ IT IS ONE OF THE GREAT JOYS OF MY LIFE, TO BE PART OF THIS WORK.

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2025
 Committees and Goals**

1. Committee A: Mission and Vision
 - a. Create a new mission and vision (done!)
2. Committee B: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - a. Communicate and claim Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as SCPO’s new Identity
 - b. Create change internally as a staff
 - c. Increase and retain diversity among staff and residents
3. Committee C: Retention & Recruitment
 - a. Ensure Fair Wages
 - b. Recognition of SCPO staff
4. Committee D: Succession & Cross-Training
 - a. Succession planning for retirement of long-time leaders
 - b. Disseminate knowledge of day-to-day operations from administrative level
 - c. Cross-train staff across the organization



Lisa Buscemi, Director and Julia Belcer, Manager stand outside of Jennifer House



DeShawn McLamore, Coordinator of Permanent Supportive Housing & Director of Flower City Apartments



Jon Olsen, Director, Jim Smith, Executive Director, and Luther Knight, Case Manager & Kitchen Manager, at Nielsen House



I WAS FORTUNATE TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF OTHERS THAT CAME BEFORE ME AT NIELSEN HOUSE, AND I’M HONORED TO PAY IT FORWARD NOW.



ABOUT US: UPDATED

Our new Mission, Vision, Vivid Description of the Future, and Personality Traits better reflect the work we're doing now

Mission

Believing in the inherent goodness of every person and the impact of belonging, Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach empowers individuals who are justice-involved and homeless by providing stable housing, life skills, connections to treatment services, and a supportive community.

Vision

A healthy, safe, and equitable community, with abundant opportunities for all.

Vivid Description 25 years into the Future

Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach believes in the inherent goodness, value, and strength of each person and that all people can lead fulfilling lives. We seek liberation from racism and discrimination for justice-involved individuals, especially those disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, including Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color, the LGBTQ+ community, and people affected by mental illness and/or substance use disorders. People from diverse religious backgrounds are welcomed, as are their expressions of faith. We will ensure that people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system and homelessness can access a stable home, economic empowerment, opportunities for enrichment, healthy relationships, and treatment services.

At SCPO, individuals will find a safe haven in our warm and restorative communities, experiencing the healing and empowerment they need to confidently take their next step. With housing as our bedrock, we will be the first choice for re-entry programs. We will use evidence-based practices to support individual transformations and break cycles of incarceration, estrangement, and trauma. We will work alongside advocacy groups, elected officials, and neighborhoods in the Greater Rochester Area to demonstrate the effectiveness of alternatives to incarceration.

Passionate and knowledgeable staff will be champions of the SCPO vision and will be empowered by the life-changing work. We will reflect the communities we serve, with leaders of color at every level of our organization. Alumni will continue to be peer role models, returning as volunteers and staff to inspire residents with their courage and leadership. They will feel a sense of belonging in our homes long after they have moved on to living independently or reunified with their families. Our board will be made up of invested individuals with the passion, gifts, and expertise to work in the community and help us achieve our vision.

SCPO will continue to advocate for alternatives to incarceration to strengthen families and address the root causes of poverty and trauma. Together, we will build a healthy, safe, and equitable community, ensuring that people who have experienced the criminal justice system and homelessness have abundant opportunities for a fulfilling life.

Personality Traits

Restorative, Inclusive, Dedicated, Hospitable, Resilient

LOGOS: CREATED

While working on our new website and 'about us' statements, we designed logos for all of our housing programs.



WEBSITE: NEW AND IMPROVED

We worked hard this year to create a website that better communicates our work.

Check out our new website, which went live in December 2023.

<https://www.spirituschristiprisonoutreach.org/>





IMPORTANT OUTCOMES, AND NUMBERS SERVED

- **119 People (including children) were housed in an SCPO Program; 112 of whom were adults**
- **73 of those 119 lived in Jennifer House or Nielsen House at some point**

Of those adults that lived in an SCPO housing program

93% Achieved Housing Stability

94% Empowered Economically

88% Remained Engaged with Mental Health Care Plan

97% Reunited with Family or Created Healthy Relationships

100%(!) of clients with children improved their relationships with their children (75 total children, including adult children)

Visits

Jennifer House and Nielsen House had at least 126 visitors from SCPO apartment programs. They also had a total of at least 810 hours of visits from people who came for laundry, meals, paperwork, assistance with medication, or a just for support (many visitors stop by casually without signing in).

State of the Heart

State of the Heart is a weekly support group that takes place at both Jennifer House and Nielsen House. Alumni, community members, guests, and others come together. We hosted about 400 guests and 1,456 residents at meetings (duplicated).

Monroe County Jail Support Groups

Jennifer House and Nielsen House each host weekly groups at Monroe County Jail. About 1200 people (duplicated) attended these groups.

Respite Stays

11 people utilized a Respite Stay at Jennifer or Nielsen House. A Respite Stay allows a former resident to stay at the Houses for a period of time (often after going to inpatient treatment). This allows them to get back on track without losing their housing.

Employment Opportunities

21 of those who resided in SCPO housing this year became employed by SCPO at some point, by doing odd jobs, an occasional shift at the House, or becoming a steady fixture on the schedule.

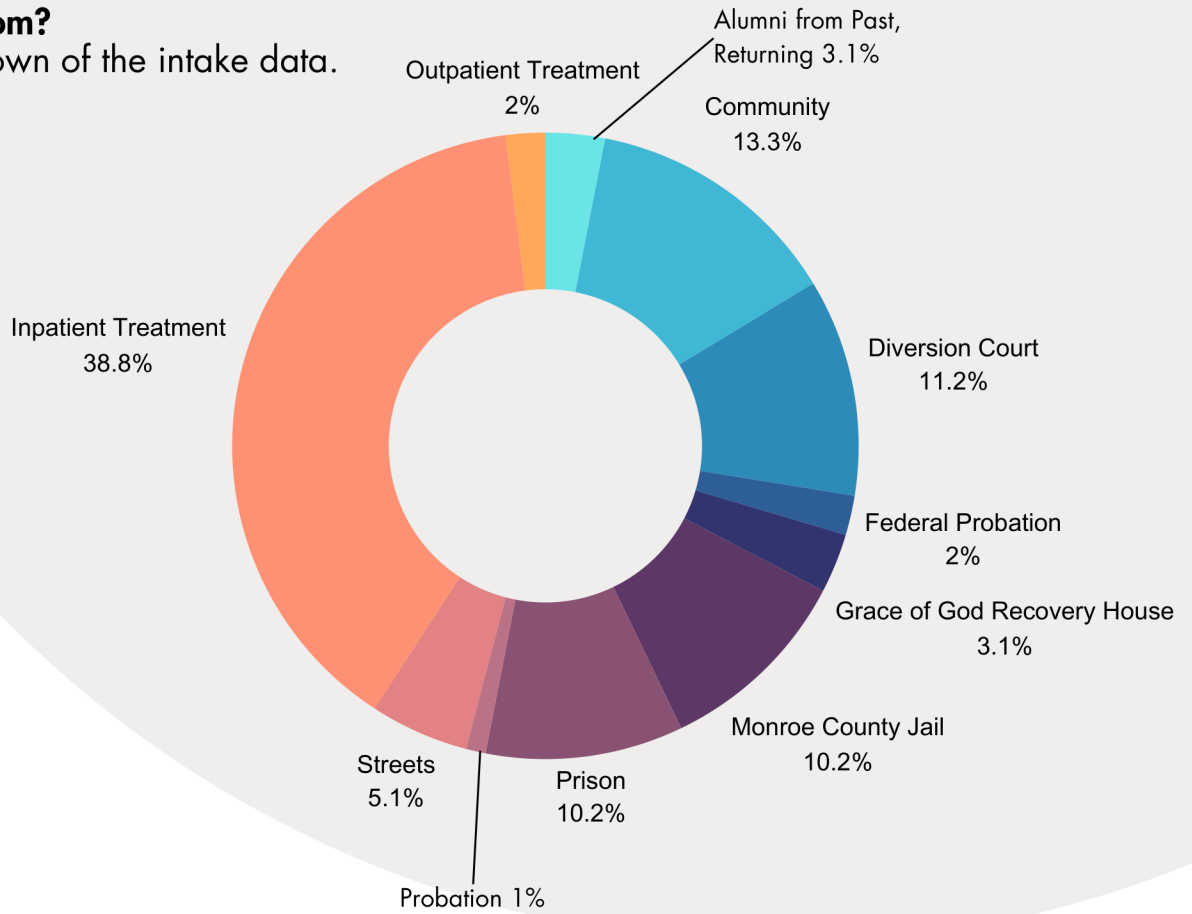
Alumni at Staff

A point-in-time count of staff revealed that 25 of 34 staff were alumni of the programs

REFERRAL SOURCES

We are commonly asked: Where do residents come from?

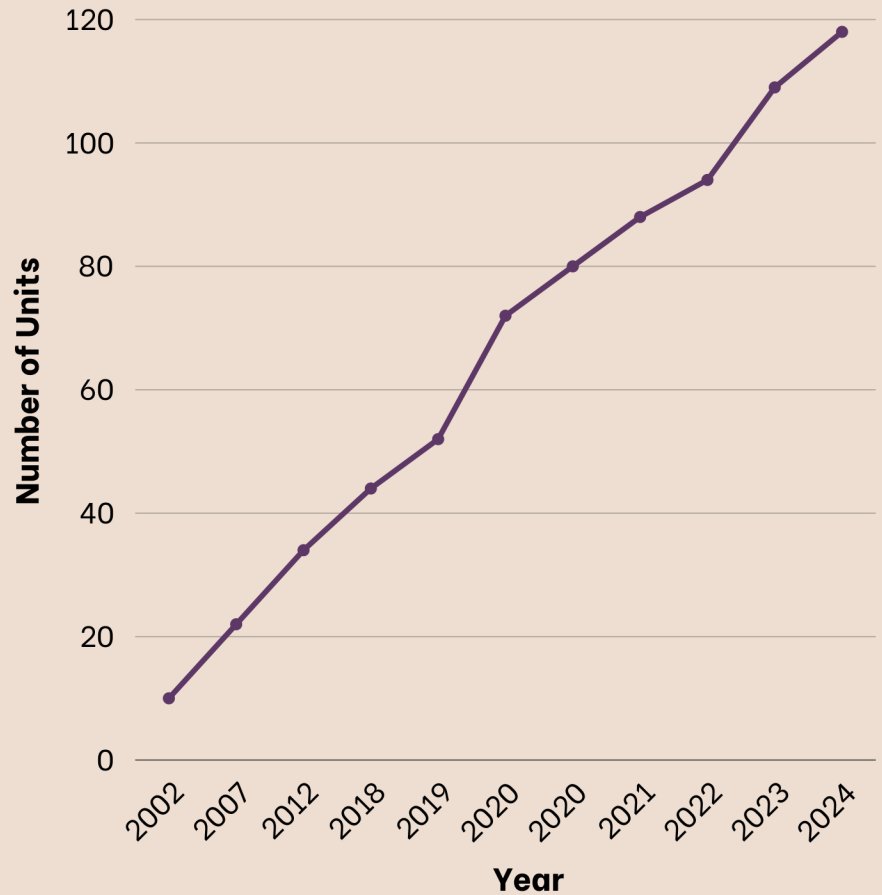
Here is a breakdown of the intake data.



HOUSING PROGRAMS: MORE AND GROWING

Our housing programs have grown, and continue to grow.

Here is a breakdown of the growth.





Memories from 2023



In Memoriam

We would like to honor members of the SCPO community that passed away this year.
 May you rest easy, in Grace and Love,
 From all of us at Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach

"I am I and you are you.
 Whatever we were to each other,
 That, we are still."
 -Henry Scott Holland

WRITING OUR HISTORY

We are documenting our history in timeline form. Here is the first draft. Do you have a correction, addition, or suggestion? Contact us!

1978 Corpus Christi Church Parishioners were visiting people in jail through the Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministries

1979 Father Harold Rogers donates his home on Breck Street, which later became 'Rogers House,' a re-entry program that was an earlier version of Jennifer House and Nielsen House

1980 Rogers House is officially founded
The first resident is welcomed to Rogers House
Jim Smith starts as a volunteer

1981 Jim Smith is hired

1983 Rogers House starts an in-person men's counseling group at Groveland Prison

1987 Rogers House Restaurant opens, which is staffed by Rogers House residents and alumni and led by Jennifer Diez Vasquez

1988 Rogers House starts an in-person women's counseling group at Groveland Prison

1991 Roger's House for Women opens, but only for a short time

1997 Rogers House for Men moves (to the current site of Jennifer House)

1998 Pearl House, a residence for women, opens
The Vatican finds fault in the practice of Corpus Christi Church (1. The Prominent Role of women on the altar during liturgies 2. Celebrating marriage equality 3. An invitation for all to participate in communion).
Leaders of the church are fired by the Diocese of Rochester.
The Women of Conviction project is conducted by the Outreach, which gave voices to women impacted by the criminal justice system and informs the great need for transitional housing for women.

1999 1,100 members of Corpus Christi form Spiritus Christi Church, an independent Catholic Church, where former leaders at Corpus Christi become leaders Spiritus Christi Church, as its being formed, reaffirms its commitment to prison outreach, though it had no residents at that time.

A women's group for women who were unsentenced is started at Monroe County Jail

The Outreach takes over the group at Groveland and starts a group in Orleans County

2002 Jennifer House Opens in place of Rogers House, which had ended (originally at a capacity of 8; later expanded to 10)

2005 Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach, Inc. is founded and takes over the 501(c)3 that was established through Rogers House. The Outreach affirms itself as an independent, non-proselytizing, non-profit organization
About 29 people were served in a year

2007 Old Nielsen House on West Ave opens (12 units)

2012 PSH: SCPO's first Permanent Supportive Housing Program, Voter's Block & Frederick Douglass, opens (12 units)

2018 RRH: Scattered site Rapid ReHousing program opens (10 units)
Reverend Myra Brown become the pastor of Spiritus Christi Church: One of three Black women priests in the world and a champion of ant-racism

2019 PSH: Charlotte on the Loop Opens (8 units)

2020 PSH: Thurston Village Opens (20 units)
PSH: Voter's Block expands (from 12 units to 20)

2021 Nielsen House moves to the 19th Ward (expanding from 12 to 20 units)

2022 PSH: Flower City Opens (6 units)

2023 PSH: Flower City II (opening December 2023!) (15 units)

2024 PSH: Federal Street (9 units, include 2-bedroom units)

2025 By 2025, we anticipate having a total of 30 transitional housing beds, 10 Rapid ReHousing apartments, and 88 Permanent Supportive Housing Apartments; in total, this is 118 housing options in the SCPO suite of housing programs.