



**AURORA
COMMONS**

8914

JAD
RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
翡翠酒家
206-228-8000

ANNUAL REPORT

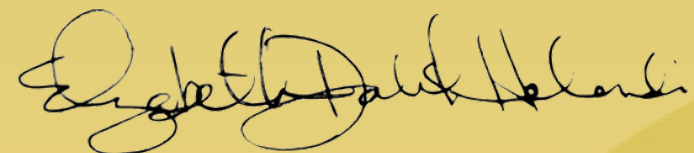
JULY 2021-JUNE 2022

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With the many adaptations and pivots that COVID has required us to make, many of us have found a new "normal". At the Commons as have we continued to navigate life during a pandemic, ***though meeting our mission has looked very different it is more relevant than ever.***

This fiscal year was marked by tremendous growth. Not only did we see our attendance numbers increase by 24%, we finalized the purchase of our property ***establishing our permanent home.*** This major milestone for our organization was accomplished through the laborious effort of our board, generous donors, community partners, consultants, The City of Seattle, members of our State Legislature, and our deeply committed and incredibly talented staff.

As we begin to look up from our day to day marathon of meeting the continually growing and changing needs of the community, we are encouraged by the possibilities that our new property can afford. We are looking forward to forging new partnerships, creating new programs, and ***deepening our connection with our neighbors and neighborhood.*** We are here to stay and we are here to listen, not only to the needs of our unsheltered neighbors, but to our community as a whole as we dig in our roots even deeper and settle into our permanent home.



Elizabeth Dahl Helendi
Executive Director
Aurora Commons



YEAR IN REVIEW

13,854 / 11,134 FY21

Visits to the Commons

456 / 250 FY21

Neighbors new to the Commons

22 / 30 FY21

Neighbors matched with Housing

2,720 / 1,128 FY21

Volunteer Hours

1,324 / 482 FY21

Partner Hours

388 / 243 FY21

**Male & Gender Nonconforming
Neighbors accessed Advocacy**

218 / 140 FY21

**Female Identifying Neighbors
accessed Advocacy**

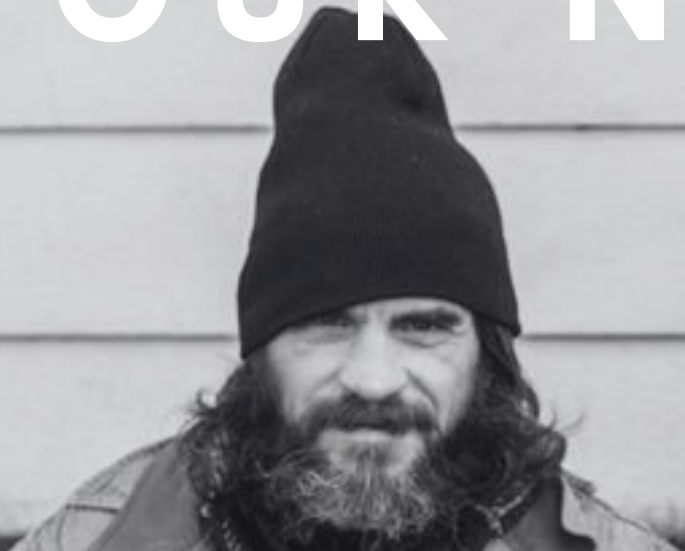
172 / 140 FY21

Neighbors accessed SHE Clinic

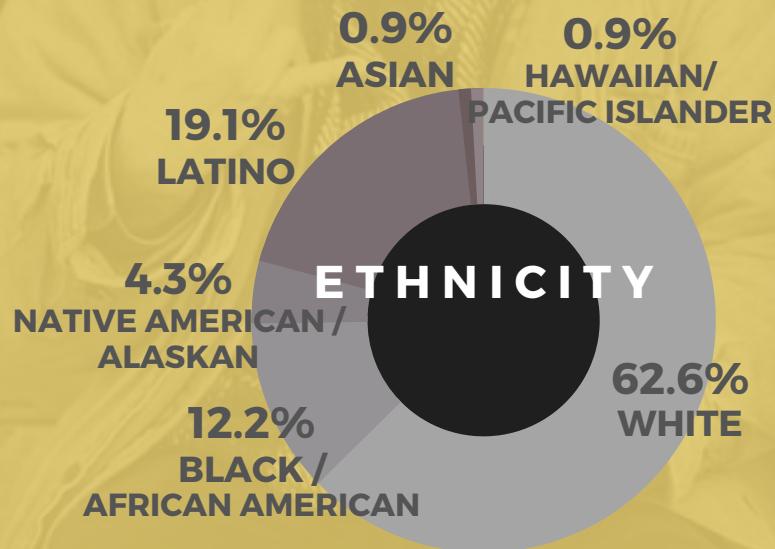
106

Neighbors accessed Aurora Clinic

OUR NEIGHBORS

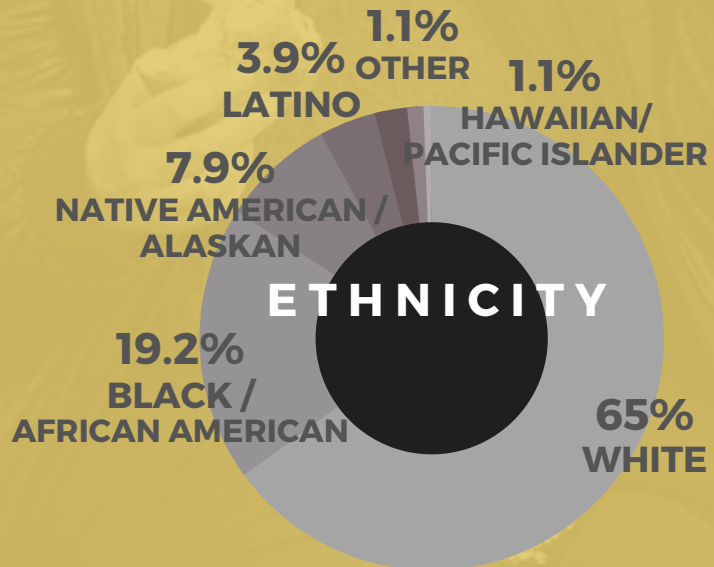


MALE IDENTIFYING & GENDER NONCONFORMING



MEDIAN AGE 51

FEMALE IDENTIFYING



MEDIAN AGE 41



"IT'S GOOD TO
SEE YOU!"
OUR NEIGHBOR
REPLIED "IT'S
GOOD TO BE
SEEN."

MONDAY-THURSDAY FROM ENTRANCE WE WELCOME OUR NEIGHBORS WITH BOTTOMLESS CUPS OF COFFEE, CHECKING TO SEE HOW WE CAN BEST SUPPORT AND CARE FOR THEM.

DROP-IN

For over 2 years now we have operated at a limited capacity with drop-in hours Monday-Thursday, 10am-1pm, and no access to our People's Kitchen. Despite the continued impacts of COVID, ***we welcomed 2x as many new neighbors to the Commons and saw a 24% increase in our annual attendance.***



22%

The Commons served 22% of the **total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in King County** based on The Point In Time Count taken in March 2022 by King County Regional Homeless Authority.

"THANK YOU FOR MAKING PEOPLE'S LIVES BETTER AS BEST YOU CAN IN AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION (COVID) IT MATTERS TO SO MANY."

- COMMONS NEIGHBOR



ADVOCACY

Our **team-based advocacy** leaves **lots of room for people to come as they are** and sit down with an advocate. This low-barrier approach has helped us better connect with those who come to Aurora Commons each week. Our goal is to continue to re-imagine how we can better serve our amazing neighbors.

3,020

Total advocacy engagements:
The number of times we met
one-on-one with a neighbor.

THE CORE OF OUR ADVOCACY MISSION LIES THIS SIMPLE QUESTION: HOW CAN WE WALK ALONGSIDE PEOPLE TOWARD THEIR GOALS WHILE HONORING THEIR AGENCY AND HUMANITY AT THE SAME TIME?

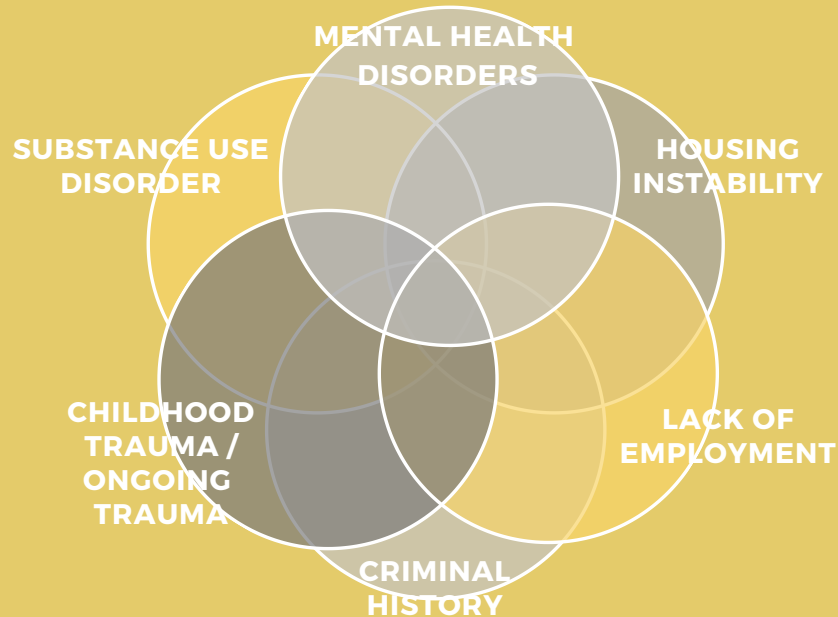




**"THANK YOU
FOR BEING HERE
FOR US. YOU
ARE REALLY
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE."**

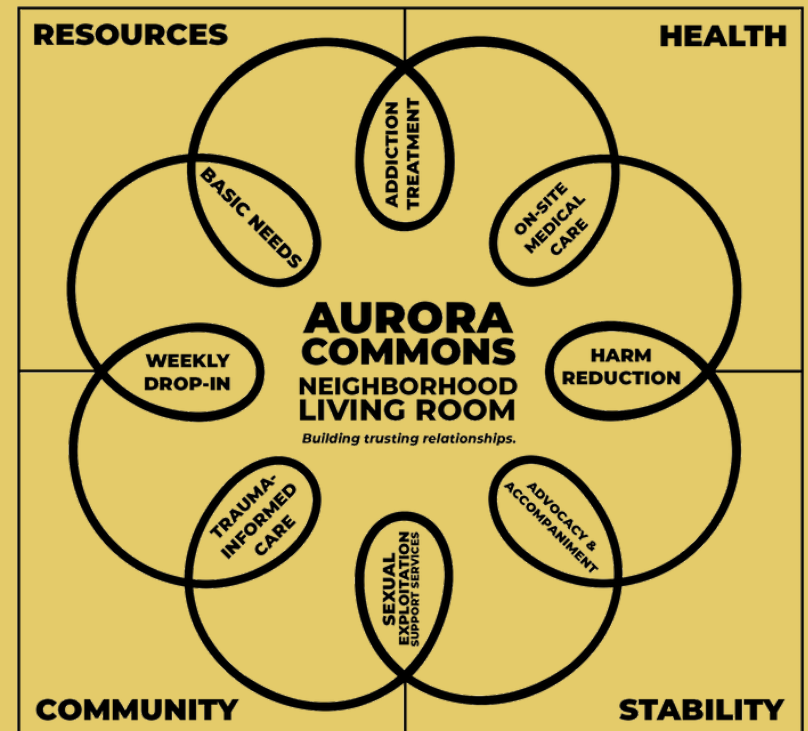
MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE WE DO, OUR NEIGHBORS THANK US FOR OUR CONSISTENT PRESENCE ON AURORA AVE.

THE COMMONS WAY



After over 10 years of holding the stories of our neighbors we recognize both the **complexities of each individual narrative** as well as **some of the commonalities that emerge as barriers to seeking care and taking steps toward stability**. While this list is not exhaustive each individual neighbor is dealing with most, if not all, of these challenges on a daily basis.

We offer many practical resources these neighbors who are struggling to access basic survival needs, However, at the heart of our philosophy of care we know that over time as these neighbors **build trusting relationships with our staff, they will feel safe enough to address their more complex needs** and overcome these challenges and barriers they face when trying to navigate the larger network of social services in Seattle..



ONE NEIGHBOR'S ROAD TO HOUSING

The journey towards housing stability can take years. When we first met our neighbor, who we will call Carl, he was very quiet and soft spoken. Like many of our neighbors, his story is heavy-laden with years of trauma and then re-traumatization in the prison-system, resulting in severe mental health challenges and consequently substance-use to self-medicate.

In the midst of these challenges, Carl found a safe place at the Commons. It took us a few weeks to learn his name, and a few months to see him smile and engage in conversation. **Over the course of a year getting to know Carl, he shared some of his story with us and also his desire to find housing.**

Connecting our neighbors to housing is most often a monumental task. In addition to the lack of housing or shelter options, our neighbors who are living unsheltered have to wake up each day spending a good portion of it figuring out how to just survive the day; making the task of making or keeping appointments enormously difficult.

Carl continued to come back regularly for nearly 2 years, even when the support we could offer him was not quite enough.

He was also befriended by a housed neighbor, who noticed Carl sleeping outside near his home. **Though this housed neighbor had little experience in this field, he reached out to ask us how he could best offer support and encourage Carl as he navigated the housing process.**

The reality is our unhoused neighbors do not have the network of family and friends offering them the care and support that is available for most of us. None of us can do everything alone; all of us need community and support. Through the care of our staff, constant communication and **coordination with our program partners at LEAD and his HEN case manager, as well as encouragement from his housed neighbor, today Carl is housed because he got housing himself.**

CARL DID THE WORK of not only surviving day to day, but believing in the possibility of a different future. He showed up for a year with the courage to risk the possibility that he would not be approved for the assistance he was seeking. We were just there to support him along the way.

In this last year 606 neighbors met with a community advocate, with housing being part of their conversations.
Of those 606, 22 got housing.



22

S.H.E. CLINIC

Launched in July 2018 in partnership with UW Harborview offering kind, non-judgmental health care to female identifying neighbors twice a week in Aurora Commons new clinic rooms.

The S.H.E. Clinic has pioneered a new model of care being duplicated and used as a framework for the development of other low barrier medical clinics, including the Aurora Clinic at the Commons.

**735
TOTAL
VISITS**



Featured artwork done by SHE Clinic patient. Of the 346 total visits, **SHE Clinic saw 144 unique patients.**



**350
TOTAL
VISITS**

AURORA CLINIC

Launched in November 2021 in partnership with UW Harborview, Aurora Clinic serves male identifying and gender nonconforming neighbors twice a week in Aurora Commons.

Of the 350 total visits, **106 unique neighbors visited Aurora Clinic and came back for follow up care.**



DROP-IN SUPPORT

**590
HOURS
SINCE
DEC 2022**

Since December 2021 volunteers have helped support our neighbors and staff during drop-in hours. We had both old friends and new faces join us, helping at our host station making our neighbors' favorite hot drinks, checking for mail, providing support as neighbors shop the clothing closet or work at our computer stations.

VOLUNTEERS

HOT MEAL TEAMS

Our beloved People's Kitchen has remained closed since March 2020 due to COVID. In July 2020, we launched our volunteer meal teams at Bethany Community Church Green Lake. Volunteers provided **1,640 hours of support, making over 14,000 meals** to serve our neighbors during our drop-in programming as well as our Thanksgiving & Christmas events.



**1,640
HOURS**

A photograph of a person's hand holding a vibrant red rose. The person is wearing a black t-shirt with white text that includes 'TAPAC' and a small white hand icon. The background is a wall with colorful graffiti. The image is overlaid with a yellow banner at the bottom.

WE REMEMBER

KELLY GANGL
PAUL LEPTICH
MICHAEL "TRAINWRECK" SANFORD

LANCE BROWN
"GENO"
SANFORD

GRETCHEN CAMP
KEARA SEDGWICK
TIFFANY KING

THANK YOU PARTNERS



PROGRAM

UW Harborview Medical Center
Beyond Project
Bethany Community Church
Seattle Veterinary Outreach
REACH
DESC
Aurora Oaks (Lake City Partners)
HOPE Team (City of Seattle)
Real Escape from the Sex Trade
YWCA
Salvation Army
Operation for Prostitute
Survivors

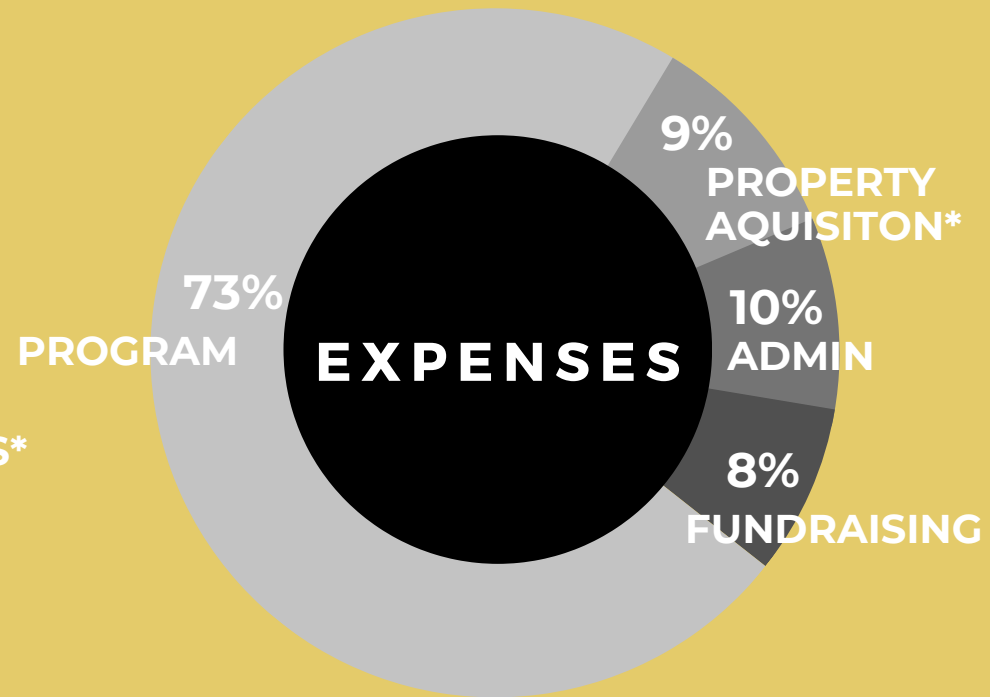
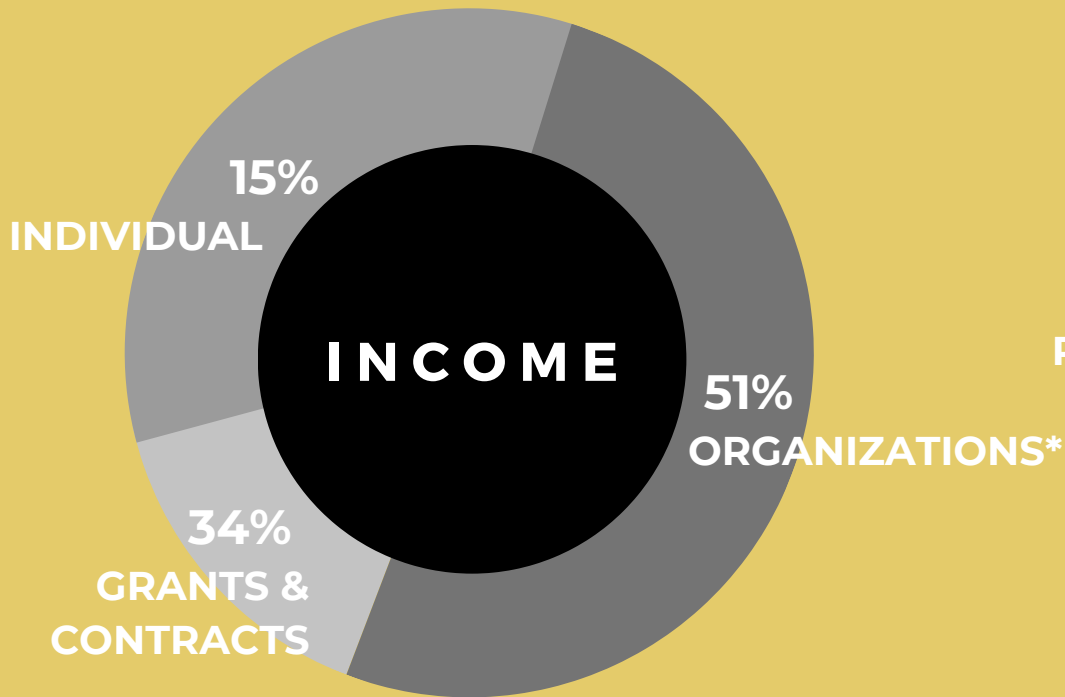
COMMUNITY

Awake Church
Emmaus Road Church
Redemption Church
Emmanuel Anglican
Seattle Church
Seattle First Baptist
Church
Phinney Neighborhood
Association
Robert Eagle Staff
Middle School

IN-KIND

Storyville Coffee
Fidalgo Coffee
Labels Consignment
Clothing
Oiselle
Love Everyone As
Neighbors
Seattle Biscuit Company
Sea Wolf Bakery
I Support the Girls

BY THE NUMBERS



*Organizational Giving is a larger % this year due to Bethany Community Church's capital campaign for our permanent home. We are so grateful for you all and your support of the vision & mission of the Commons for many years to come.

*Property Acquisition - included are costs and fees associated with due diligence, building feasibility study & legal fees for acquiring our permanent home.



STAFF

Elizabeth Dahl Helendi

Executive Director

Sara Ewalt

Operations Manager

Lorie Ann Larson

Program Manager

Jessica Liebenberg

Lead Drop-In Host

Lea Mettier

Drop-In Host

Christina Smith

Development & Communications

Luke Sumner

Community Advocate Manager

Mary Schmidt

CSE Community Advocate

Carrie Roth

Community Advocate

Robert Clapsaddle

Facilities Support

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Wyse

Board Chair

Jamie Clausen

Secretary

Dan Wise

Giana Davidson

Liza Skelton

Carole Antoncich