

Providing a path for homeless women in East King County
to a home of their own

The Sophia Way

www.sophiaway.org

A program of the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council



Annual Report 2009

Mission

The mission of The Sophia Way is to help end homelessness in East King County by providing overnight shelter, support services, education, and subsidized housing to single adult homeless women as they transition from homelessness to permanent housing and an independent, stable life. Currently, we are the only staffed overnight shelter for single adult women on the Eastside.

The Sophia Way partners with groups and individuals in our community to achieve the shared goal of ending homelessness as part of King County's 10-Year Plan. We are part of the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council and do not discriminate based on religion, age, color, race, sexual orientation or national origin.

Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Sophia Community,

The Sophia Way founders saw the despair experienced by homeless women who were stripped of their resources and had nowhere to turn for shelter or housing. The passion they felt ignited a fire that has spread throughout the community, bringing forward countless individuals who rallied together, aiding our efforts in a myriad of ways. We cannot thank you enough, for without you this agency would not be successful.

Our first-year statistics show the fruit of our efforts. Many times tears of despair turned into waterfalls of hope. Yet neither statistics nor the label "single homeless women" accurately describe the women we serve. These individuals face the challenges of our economy; they are widows marred by grief or perhaps are married but their spouse is absent. They may have young children but are estranged from family, or they don't want to burden adult children. They may be the victims of abuse or neglect by these same children. Some are challenged with a form of mental illness that places the basics of living out of reach. Others are dealing with the aftermath of domestic violence, whose devastation is difficult to emotionally leave behind. These images and countless others characterize the women we serve. The descriptor we find most accurate is "courageous survivors."

At the Sophia Way, we plan to continue our efforts in not merely touching women's lives but *changing* them. 2010 will be marked by the delivery of enhanced services, community building, and housing more women as they journey to their destination of independent living. We need your support and assistance as we continue to meet this growing need.

Thank you for helping us provide women on the Eastside the opportunity to change their lives. It is their opportunity to seize and ours to provide.

Helen



*Helen Leuzzi
Executive
Director*

*"...we show
each woman
that inner
quality she
possesses that
will enable her
to face her
journey with
courage and
hope"*

Program Highlights

In our first year, we:

- * Moved 16 women into permanent housing
- * Kept our shelter at 89% capacity, provided a shelter bed 2,400 times, and served more than 4,000 meals
- * Held classes on managing finances, credit ratings, staying healthy, nutrition, cooking, resolving conflicts, and more
- * Attracted 200+ volunteers, and added 650 people to our mailing list
- * Moved into real offices!
- * Were featured in *The Seattle Times* and the *Bellevue Reporter*

Our plans for 2010 include:

- * Starting a life coaching program
- * Doubling our overnight shelter
- * Moving 24 more women into housing



Our new home!

Our Program

We offer the education, tools, guidance, and housing that women experiencing homelessness need to make sustainable changes in their lives.

- * Overnight shelter and basic necessities (hot meals, showers, laundry, computers, phones, clothing)
- * Case management and social service support
- * Counseling and referrals for substance abuse and mental health issues
- * Life skills classes and one-on-one mentoring
- * Access to professional services (dental/vision care, salon services)



*Case Manager
Diane DeLapp
meets regularly
with each Sophia
Way participant*

Our Overnight Shelter: Sophia's Place

Our shelter is open from 7 pm-7 am every day and is staffed at all times. On weekdays, it is housed at Bellevue First Congregational Church and on weekends it moves to host locations.

Each woman receives one-on-one, practical training in the life skills needed after being homeless. Weekly classes are taught by experts from the community and cover a range of topics related to housing and independent living (such as nutrition, budgeting, credit scores, and rental leases).

Permanent Housing: Sophia's Home

We aim to provide each woman in our program with permanent housing as rapidly as possible, offering rental subsidies and continuing case management. The goal is for each client to become more self-sufficient over time through increased income sources, greater self-confidence, and a robust support network.

So far, 19 women have moved into their own housing. Of these, 7 now support themselves independently, 4 with full-time jobs.



*Living room of
Rosco House,
home to 5
women*



Spreading the word on the Microsoft Sammamish Campus

Shelter Supervisor Leslie Miller serves dinner



Our Partners

From the beginning, we knew that the best way for our new organization to flourish was by partnering with other groups already working to end homelessness in King County. In the past year, we have formed close ties with experts in all areas, including mental health, substance abuse, and housing. They provide direct services to our clients, advice to our staff and board, and more.

Our Weekend Hosts

Our weekend hosts generously donate their facilities each weekend for two months at a time. This includes space for sleeping mats, access to a kitchen and other amenities, and often hot meals. In 2009, the following faith organizations gave a weekend home to our clients:

- Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
- St. John's Episcopal Church
- Lake Washington United Methodist
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church
- Redmond United Methodist

Our Meal Donors

We'd like to extend a very special thank you to the organizations and individuals who provide ongoing meals to our clients:

- Annie Bruch
- Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church
- Aldersgate UMC
- Mercer Island Congregational Church
- Beacon UMC
- Newport Presbyterian Church
- Kim Aue, My Chef At Home
- Pilgrim Lutheran Church
- Emmanuel Episcopal Church
- St. John Vianney Catholic Church
- Cathy Goodrich
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church
- Lake Washington UMC
- Shepard of the Hills Lutheran Church

Key to our first year were the many people and groups from around the community who offered their time, talent and elbow grease to help move women from homelessness into a home. Volunteers cooked, hauled, delivered, designed, arranged, tutored, collected, counted, greeted, styled, taught, coached, encouraged, alphabetized, posted, downloaded, folded, cleaned... the list goes on and on.



Volunteer Diya signs the guest-book while visiting the apartment of a Sophia Way

In October, we were invited to take part in a Microsoft Giving event, along with Congregations for the Homeless. Our unusual booth — complete with love beads and lava lites— attracted many visitors. Several Microsoft employees now regularly volunteer (including one who helped create this report!)



A stylist from SEVEN salon helps make our first "Fashion Night" absolutely fabulous!

You Gave a Home for the Holidays!



Thanks to our many volunteers, donors, and guests, our anniversary party on December 9 was a great success! We anticipated welcoming 75 guests to the beautiful Harbor Club Bellevue. Much to our delight, more than 130 RSVP'd.

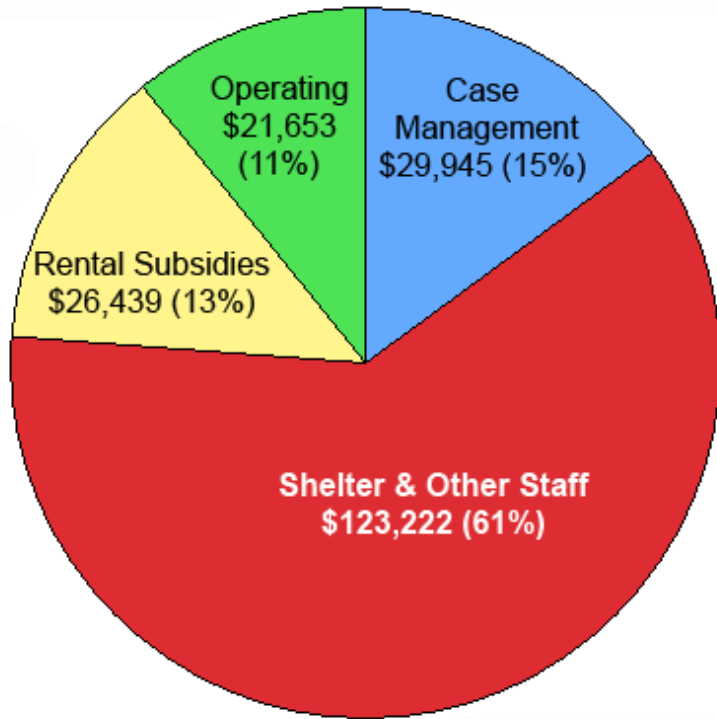
Guests enjoyed sumptuous food, holiday carolers, and a chance to learn more about our organization and the women we serve. Executive Director Helen Leuzzi looked back on our first year and program participant Carol Bostic talked about her own experience. Client Karen Dash designed the logo for the event, which we used on invitations, holiday cards, and our website.

More than a dozen businesses contributed items for the silent auction which, together with donations, raised more than \$11,000 — not bad for our first big event!

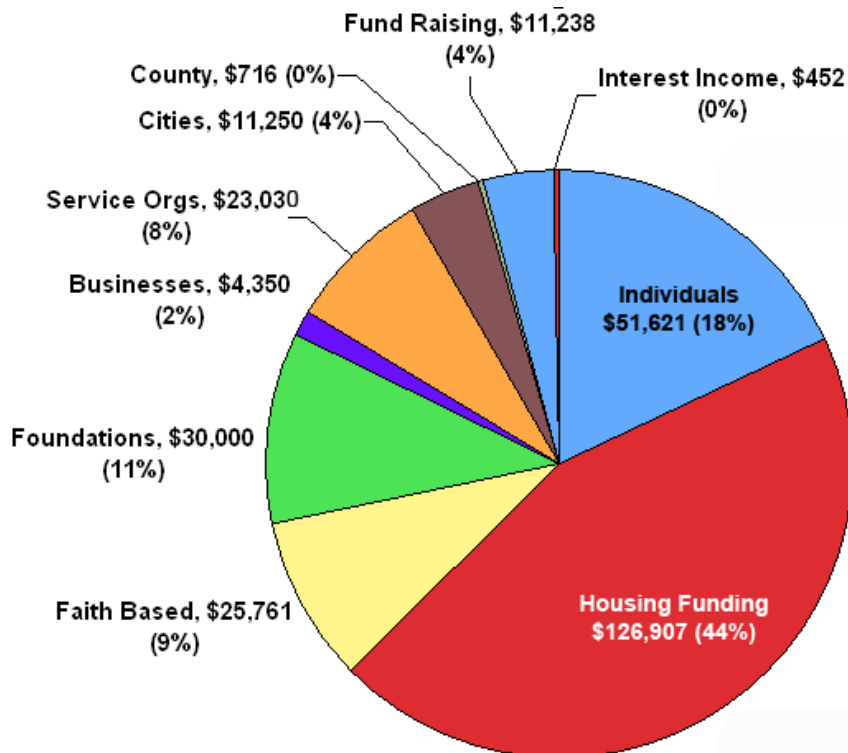


Sophia Way client Carol talks about "REI: Respect, Inspiration, and Empowerment."

2009 Expenses

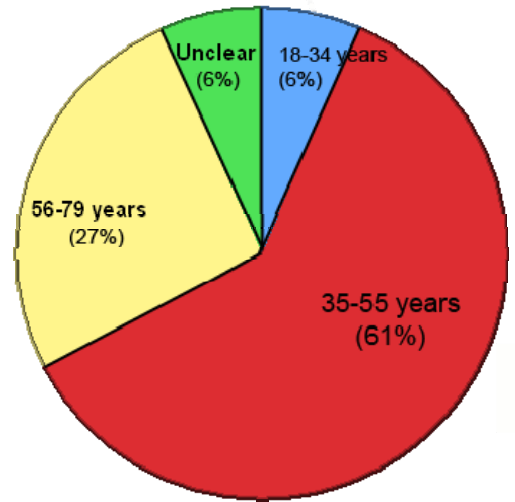


2009 Income

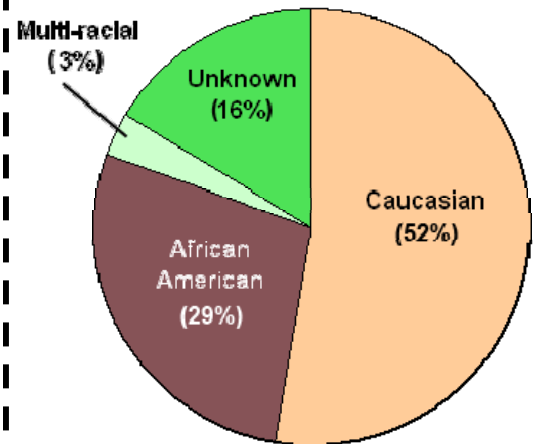


Our clients

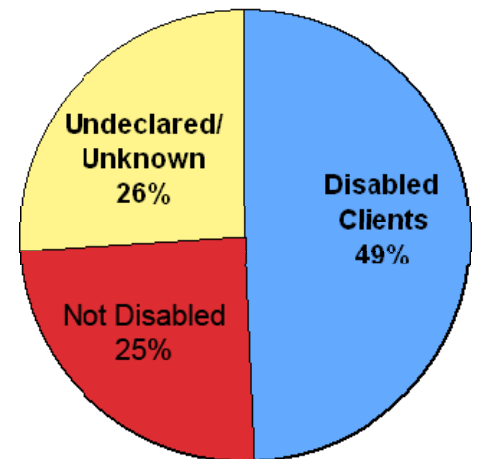
Age



Race



Disability*



* Includes physical and mental disabilities

Thank you to our donors and supporters. Without you, we wouldn't exist.

\$100,000+ Rosco Housing Fund

\$5,000-99,999

Anonymous
Bellevue First Congregational Church
Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club
City of Bellevue
Eastside Community Aid Thrift Shop
First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue
The Gratia Ainslie Foundation

Catherine & Frederick Hayes Foundation
Karina O'Malley
The Norcliffe Foundation
Red Lion Hotel
Quadrant Homes
Seattle Foundation
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Lake Washington United Methodist Women
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Ron Lee
Helen Leuzzi

Mary McKenzie
Mary, Queen of Peace Church
Mercer Island Women's Club
Northshore United Church of Christ
Beverly Parsons
PEO Chapter-GE Bellevue
Property Management NW
Raman Family Foundation
Redmond United Methodist Church
Mary & Dave Rumpf
St. Luke's Lutheran Church
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Salesforce.com Foundation

\$25-499

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Judy Paulson Dunsire
Eastgate Congregational

Church
Eastside Friends Meeting
Eastside Stroke Support Group
Eastlake Washington
Home Economists
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Thomas Steffen
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Diane Zimmerman
Randy Zonnefeld

Sophia Way Staff & Board

"Sophia" is the Greek word for wisdom.

She has been revered as the Wise Bride of Solomon by Jews, as the Queen of Wisdom and War by Greeks, and as the Holy Spirit of Wisdom by Christians.

Our Staff

Executive Director: Helen Leuzzi

Case Manager: Diane DeLapp

Shelter Supervisor: Leslie Miller

Shelter Staff: Melodie Niece, Kelly Kay, Margaret Schwender, Karie Stearns

Our Managing Board

Claudia Ballheim, Paul Burckhard, Monte George, Cathy Goodrich, Helen Leuzzi, Janet Olin, Karina O'Malley, Jan Swanson



"I went from 'Where am I going to go?' to 'Look at where I am going to go and who I get to share space with.' I went from 'Where am I going to go?' to 'Here's an option, and [the Sophia Way] can help

"People sometimes forget I'm someone's mother, someone's daughter... When I first came to Sophia Way, I'd never been homeless before. I had no place to lay my head.



The Sophia Way

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Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

President: JoAnne Way

Co-President: Lloyd Van Vactor

Secretary: Brian Anderson

Treasurer: Pat McDermott