

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2023

POWER FOR CHANGE





“There is no power for change greater
than a **community** discovering
what it cares about.”

Margaret J. Wheatley

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QUICK CONTACTS

Donate
[Builtbycommunity.org/donate](https://builtbycommunity.org/donate)

Crisis Helpline Services
Call or text 988
Chat online at 988lifeline.org/chat

Mobile Crisis Response
Call 1-855-581-8111 and ask for Mobile Crisis

Financial Support
Call (319) 569-6393

Food Bank
Call (319) 351-0128
Visit the Food Bank at
1045 Highway 6 East, Iowa City

Kayla the alpaca in the pasture at the future site of Crisis Stabilization Residential Services (CSRS)

CommUnity’s Fiscal Year 2023 began July 1, 2022 and ended June 30, 2023

A NOTE ON FY23

A WORD FROM SARAH NELSON



Sarah Nelson
CEO

Our agency is dedicated to providing crisis support to our neighbors where they are. While CommUnity has seen incredible growth and support over the past two years for our crisis response services, we need your help to meet the massive needs of our neighbors in our food, financial, and youth crisis stabilization services.

You may have already seen that our agency purchased a farm outside of Iowa City in August. In partnership with United Action for Youth (UAY), youth crisis stabilization services will be offered at the farm beginning in 2024. This program will provide a therapeutic place for youth to stabilize for up to ten days or an extended stay of up to 21 days for unhoused, trafficked, or runaway youth. During their stay, youth will engage in counseling, therapeutic recreation, and peer support groups.

In addition to two houses, a barn, and a stable, the purchase included nine tillable acres of land that we hope to use to grow food for the food bank. The need for grocery assistance in our community remains shockingly high. The increase in visits to the food bank in fiscal year 2023 far outpaced the otherwise healthy increase in donations. This sustainable source of produce will help our food bank, mobile pantry, and grocery delivery services provide healthy, high-quality

food for our neighbors facing hunger, but we'll still need your help - more on that on page five.

Renovations on the original farm house have already begun, and we are beyond excited to be able to provide this necessary service for kids facing a mental health crisis. Crisis Stabilization Residential Services (CSRS) will meet youth where they are and support them with unconditional positive regard.

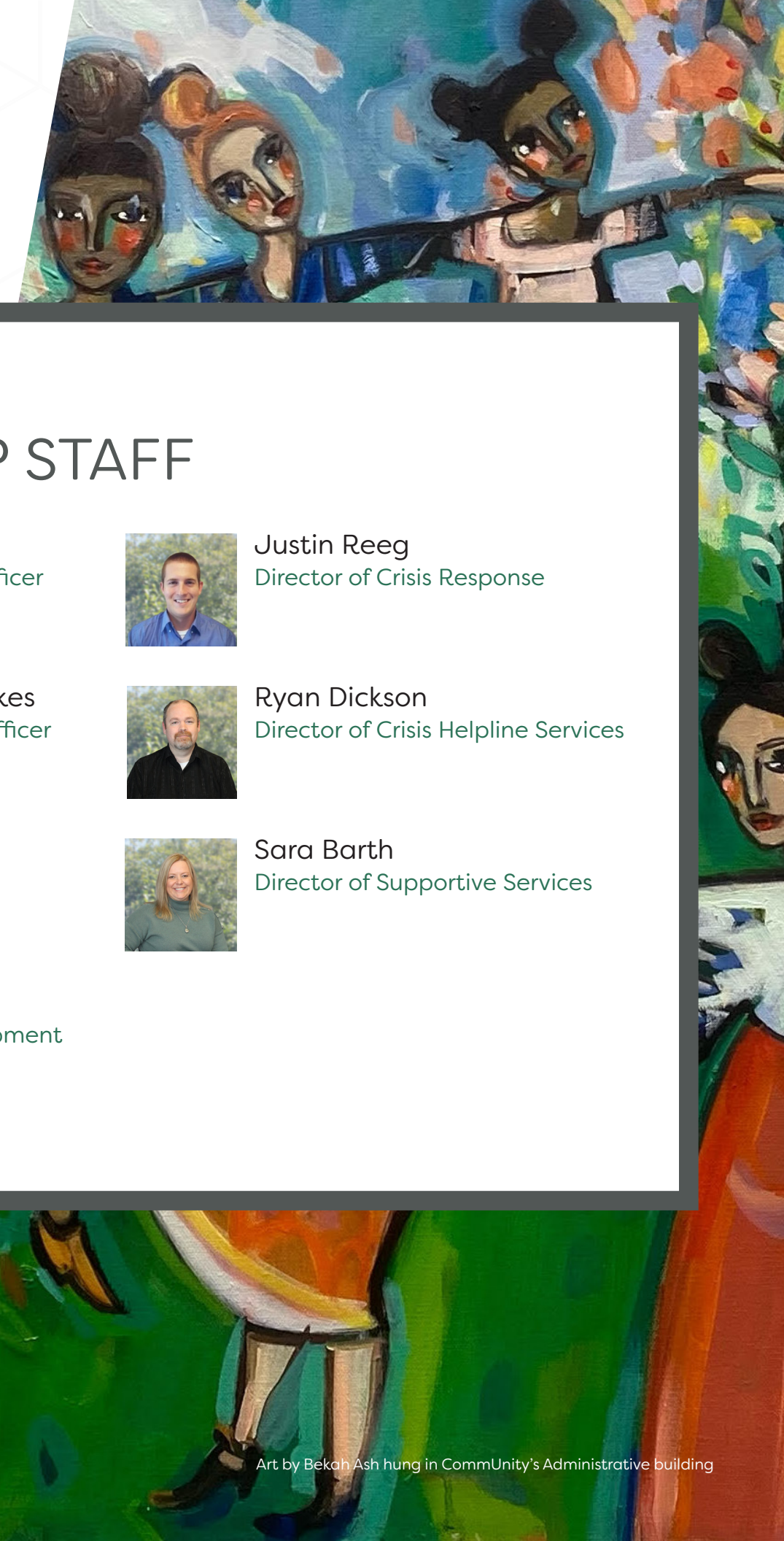
While most of our mental health services are funded through grants and contracts, CSRS is a bit different since we will deliver services on a farm complete with animals. It will take a grassroots effort with major community support to fully operationalize our vision for something unique and holistic for youth, as well as a source for growing food. We have already felt the warmth and encouragement from our community when we announced the purchase of the farm, and we are so grateful to have supportive neighbors that understand the need for this service. Youth in our community are struggling, and it will take a village to lift them up.

Thank you for your support in fiscal year 2023, and we look forward to another year of growing together in fiscal year 2024!



Mural by Ali Hval at CommUnity's administrative offices. Our building was generously painted by Right Way Painting & Staining.

MEET THE TEAM



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eddie Etsey
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Karen Shemanski
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Board Member

Erin Stresow
Board Member

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Board Member

Patti Walden
Board Member

Carlette Washington-Hoagland
Board Member

Yu Yu
Board Member

LEADERSHIP STAFF



Sarah Nelson
Chief Executive Officer



Adrianne Korbakes
Chief Operating Officer



Angie Meiers
Director of Finance



Julia Winter
Director of Development



Justin Reeg
Director of Crisis Response



Ryan Dickson
Director of Crisis Helpline Services



Sara Barth
Director of Supportive Services

Chickens and Horses and Youth Crisis Stabilization, Oh My!

It has been a difficult day and by the evening, he's decided to call Mobile Crisis Response for help. "Jeremiah" a local teen, asks the mobile crisis counselor if there is anywhere else he can go for a mental health break besides the hospital. Jeremiah does not feel safe at home, and has been in psychiatric inpatient care in the past. On this particular call, he doesn't want to take the chance of either being admitted again or being told to go home after the assessment. "The youth crisis stabilization program would have been an ideal service to connect Jeremiah to on this evening," says Parth Patel, Youth Mobile Crisis Coordinator.

The hope of Crisis Stabilization Residential Services (a.k.a. The farm) is to ensure kids like "Jeremiah" have a place to go when things get rough. There are two houses, a peaceful pond, 15 chickens, two goats, two pigs, one alpaca, one bunny, one horse

named Miss Kitty, and nine tillable acres of farmland on the property.

One home will house youth for three to ten days and the other home will offer unhoused, trafficked, or runaway youth an extended stay of 21 days. During their stay, kids will be able to engage in individual and family counseling, therapeutic recreation (with art, music, and animals), and peer support groups.

"I've seen firsthand how much of a need there is in our community for a safe, restorative environment youth and families can turn to when they're struggling with life's challenges," says Parth. "Youth and families deserve to have multiple options to turn to when they need additional support. The youth crisis stabilization program will hopefully add some much needed stability to families in our community during a time of crisis."

Stay tuned for more updates on the farm renovations and how you can support this vital program! Sign up for our eNews on our website to stay in touch.



“

I can't wait to see how this transforms the crisis continuum in our community. Between Mobile Crisis and Youth Crisis Stabilization, families will have both someone to call and a space to be, and that is **pretty incredible** if you ask me.

Parth Patel, Youth Mobile Crisis Coordinator

“The need for food far outpaces the amount of food on our shelves... many of **our neighbors are facing hunger** this year.

In fiscal year 2023, CommUnity food bank was able to provide about 37 pounds of food per household per weekly visit. To put that into perspective, a standard grocery cart filled with groceries weighs about 200 pounds on average. What we are currently able to provide to families for a whole week would fit in a shopping basket - the kind many of us use to pick up those few forgotten items in the middle of the week.

While donations to the food bank have increased slightly from fiscal year 2022 to 2023, the need for food far outpaces the amount of food on our shelves. In fiscal year 2022, we distributed 1.75 million pounds of food to 12,545 individuals.

In fiscal year 2023, we distributed 1.98 million pounds of food to 18,093 individuals. That's a 44% increase in the number of our neighbors facing hunger this year compared to last year. While the amount of food we have been able to distribute only increased 13%.

We need your help to uplift our neighbors. No parent should have to choose between keeping the lights on or feeding their children. No child should wonder where their next meal will come from. Thank you for your continued support, and we hope that with your help, we can raise the amount of food we provide families each week in fiscal year 2024.

FOOD BANK

1.98 million pounds of food distributed

46,319 visits to the Food Bank

and for those unable to make it to the Food Bank, we had 5,287 food deliveries and 1,612 Mobile Pantry visits.

18,093 individuals served annually

and an average of 181 visits for food per day.

1.04 million pounds of food donated

928,253 pounds of which were donated by Table to Table, one of our partner organizations dedicated to eliminating food waste.

694 Food Bank volunteers

served 17,360.25 hours in fiscal year 2023.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1,435 baby item visits

372 Cultivating Careers assists

574 box fans distributed

1,226 clothing vouchers distributed

572 bus passes distributed

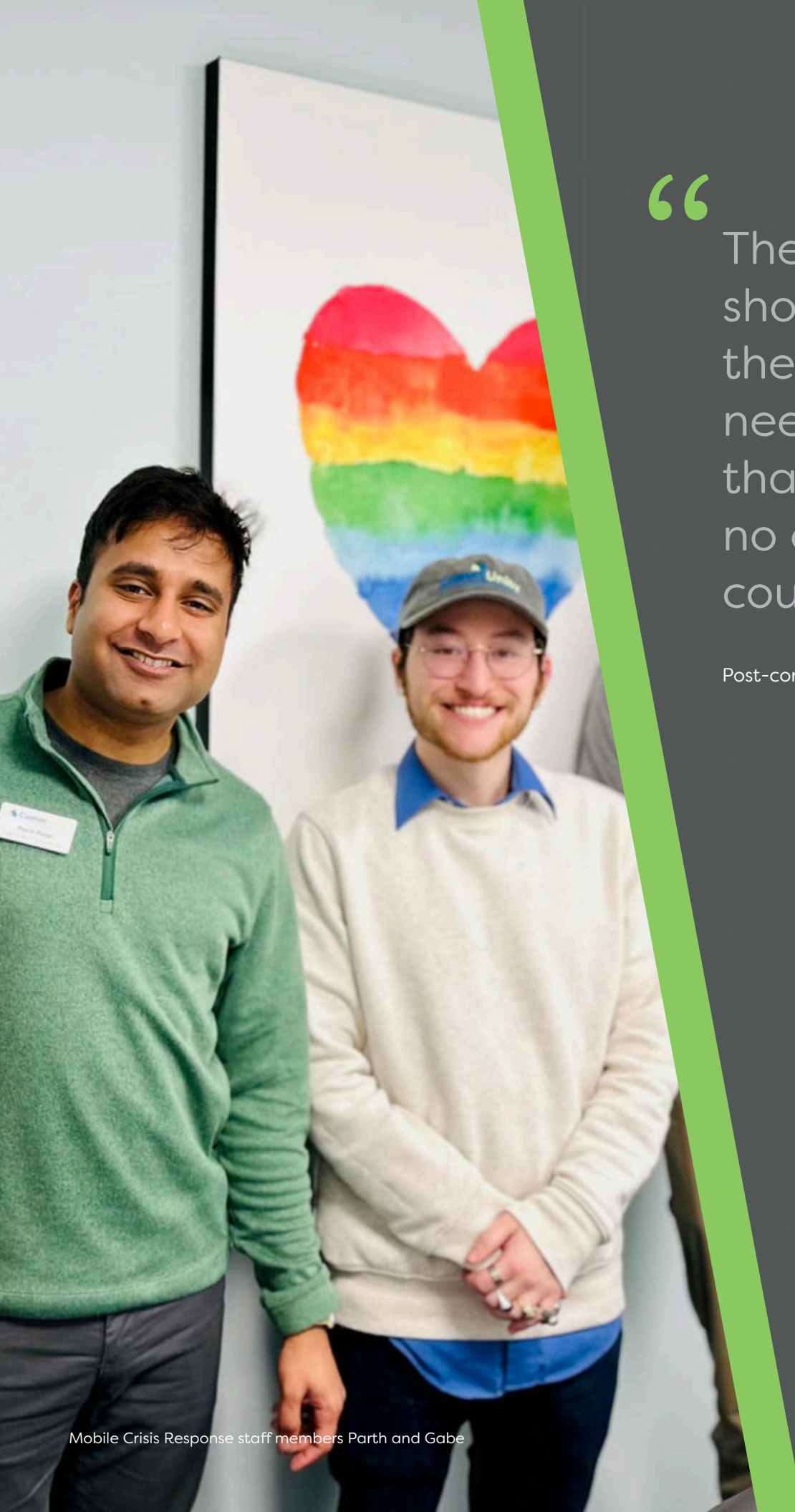
309 identification assists

719 housing and utilities assists

with 86 of those families obtaining new housing through security deposit assists.

“This food bank has the most **welcoming environment** and the staff/volunteers are all incredibly kind and helpful.

Client review of CommUnity Food Bank



“The counselor showed me the **empathy** I needed during that time when no one else could.

Post-contact client review

CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES

26 minute average mobile crisis response time

Our contract requires counselors to respond within one hour of the initial contact, but we strive to arrive on scene as soon as possible to ensure those in crisis are not alone longer than necessary.

1,376 total mobile crisis dispatches

19% of all calls were school-related dispatches, and 17% of all calls were dispatches coming from law enforcement agencies.

1,553 mobile crisis follow-up contacts

93.5% mobile crisis diversion rate

from hospitals or jails. One goal of Mobile Crisis Response is to de-escalate mental health crises to divert clients from hospitals and jails. This helps clients receive appropriate support and avoids unnecessary use of public resources.

1,853 client contacts at the GuideLink Center

968 listed substance abuse as the primary presenting issue, and 899 listed mental health crisis as the primary presenting issue.

939.6 hours providing crisis counseling at GuideLink

provided by CommUnity Triage Counselors stationed at the GuideLink center.

30 minute average GuideLink triage contact

94.82% GuideLink diversion rate

from hospitals or jails for clients who visited the GuideLink Center and spoke with a CommUnity triage counselor.

IOWANS HELPING IOWANS

When you text 988 or chat online at 988lifeline.org/chat in the state of Iowa, you will find yourself talking with a staff member in CommUnity's Crisis Helpline Services program. CommUnity is one of two Iowa-based centers that answers the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, a national network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In more than 97 percent of contacts answered by CommUnity in the first year since the launch of 988, the issue was able to be adequately handled by the crisis counselor over phone, chat, or text. In cases where further support was needed, the counselors connected the individual in crisis to local resources, such as mobile crisis, which dispatches crisis counselors to respond in-person.

Reducing the number of steps and time it takes to connect people to the appropriate service increases the chances an individual will receive the help they need, ultimately creating healthier communities. We are currently working on a pilot program to have 911 dispatchers transfer clients to Iowa 988. So in the pilot counties, Black Hawk, Johnson, and Muscatine, clients who would benefit more from emotional or mental health support than emergency response are transferred to 988. Connecting people to the appropriate emergency service in their time of crisis helps the individual get what they need as

soon as possible, as well as helping all emergency services operate smoothly. So far, 25 calls have been redirected in this way.

"It's been incredible to be part of this historic effort to improve emotional support for Iowans. Everyone involved has shown great enthusiasm and ingenuity, especially considering the real challenges that our collaboration brings," says Kyle Burke, Crisis Helpline Program Manager at CommUnity. "Mental health advocates have dreamed of this type of 911 diversion for decades, and I'm proud that our state is making that dream a reality."

Immense work went into logistically and technologically problem solving issues related to connecting the two disparate systems. Although we're still in the pilot phase, the expectation is that most, if not all, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in Iowa will eventually be able to transfer calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Iowans in crisis require the support of trained counselors who understand Iowans. People feeling anxious or depressed, parents concerned about their child dying by suicide, and families touched by addiction reach out to 988 every day. Iowa-based 988 centers understand the struggles of our neighbors and can better provide support for each individual in crisis, that's why we are so proud of our counselors and everything they do for our neighbors each and every day.

“

Thank you to the person who helped me, listened and heard me, and didn't try to fix anything, just helped me **calm down** in the middle of my crisis.

Post-contact client review

CRISIS HELPLINE SERVICES

69,303 total Helpline contacts

10,776 of which were contacts to the Iowa 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

30,248 chat contacts discussed current or recent thoughts of suicide

72.8% of clients found the conversation helpful

186.5% increase in total contacts compared to last year



For every \$1 spent...

\$0.94 goes to programs

\$0.06 goes to administration

Revenue

\$9,030,776 Contract income

\$2,114,086 In-kind donations

\$1,495,151 Contributions

\$1,081,592 Grants

\$331,145 Funding allocations

\$86,476 Other

Expenses

\$6,721,952 Crisis Helpline Services

\$3,128,803 Food Bank

\$1,420,454 Mobile Crisis Response

\$869,934 Administration

\$859,960 Financial Support

\$713,206 GuideLink Triage

\$89,189 Other

CommUnity volunteer
stocks the shelves at the
food bank



ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

CommUnity's financial growth over the past two years may give the appearance that all of our neighbors' needs are being met by contract funding and federal grants. Unfortunately, that could not be further from the truth. Under the surface of our 12 million dollar operating budget, there is much more than meets the eye.

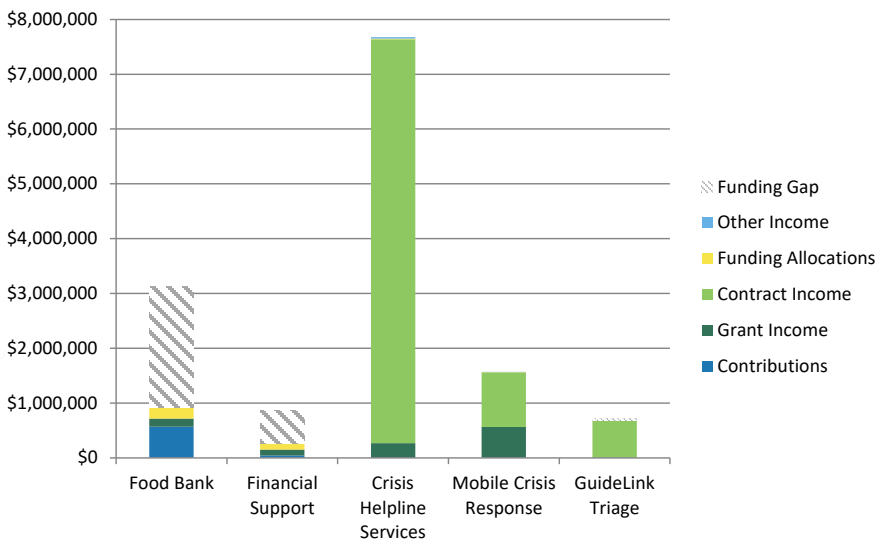
More than three-quarters of our fiscal year 2023 annual revenue was contract funding specifically earmarked for crisis services. Counselors work tirelessly to de-escalate crisis situations and make sure the person on the other end is safe. As a result, these programs are recognized as essential services, and funding is available at local, state, and national levels to ensure these

labor-intensive programs remain free and accessible for all.

Imagine if food and financial support were seen as essential, too. Last year, 75% of Food Bank funding came from small grants and individual donors like you. Your support is critical not only to sustain but also to grow this service.

Rising need in our community is quickly outpacing available resources. Inflation and cuts to government assistance programs have increased the number of families in need of grocery assistance. As the gap widens, more and more of our neighbors fall into cycles of crisis, unable to afford their families' basic needs. Your continued support allows us to meet families' unique food, financial, and emotional needs.

FY23 Program Revenue by Funding Source



DONORS, GRANTORS, AND SPONSORS

We are beyond grateful to have such overwhelming community support for our programs. Because we have such a wonderful donor base, it adds significant expense to our annual report printing costs to print a full list of our supporters. In order to consider the environmental impact and steward your dollars well, we have published our full donor list digitally this year!

Publishing our donor list digitally allows us to ensure donors are recognized at every level. It also ensures that donor

dollars go towards providing support to our neighbors facing crisis instead of being spent on printing.

To see the full donor list online, please scan the QR code or visit builtbycommunity.org/thankyou23.

Are you subscribed to our eNews list? We'll be sending donor spotlights to our email list highlighting the incredible work of our donors in fiscal year 2023.

Scan the QR code to the right or visit builtbycommunity.org/thankyou23 to see the full list of donors, grantors, and sponsors.



Hills Bank sponsors Strike Out Hunger, our summer long food drive to bridge the gap in school meals for local families!



builtbycommunity.org/thankyou23



HELP US KEEP KIDS SAFE & KEEP THE ANIMALS FED

Providing ongoing support to local youth and keeping the farm animals fed and healthy will take tremendous ongoing community support.

We will continue sharing information as the project progresses, and we would love to keep you in the loop!

Please consider donating to help sustain this vital community program and sign up to receive email updates on our website!



builtbycommunity.org/donate



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builtbycommunity.org

