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**Lydia’s House 2017 Report to Partners**

Lydia’s House had a rich, full year in 2017! We started with a new commitment to advocacy and action, praying and discerning how to do more for families experiencing poverty in our region while also putting emphasis on systemic change. As a result of this work and prayer, the fruits of last year included:

* building stronger relationships with our elected representatives, advocating with and on behalf of single mother-headed households, specifically for more affordable housing in our region
* defining affordable housing development as part of our mission and hiring a director of community housing development
* purchasing an 8 unit apartment building and commercial space, with the goal of providing long term housing for Lydia’s House graduates
* building relationships with local coalitions including Affordable Housing Advocates and The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
* redesigning our intake process to make it faster and more transparent
* defining our population served as exclusively pregnant women or women with at least one child under the age of five; building stronger partnerships with those who serve pregnant women and young children in our region
* increasing existing staff hours to improve guest care and hiring an on-site occupational therapist to teach life skills and help guests with self-directed goals
* implementing evaluation and measurement tools including the COPM, ACE score tracking and the VI-SPDAT; working with regional partners to enter the VESTA tracking system[[1]](#endnote-1)
* formalizing an “aftercare program” and working with a national foundation, the Hope and Grace Fund, to receive seed dollars to implement it

While all of this hard work was happening, we also continued serving families with emergency and transitional housing. In 2017 we housed 21 individuals, or 11 families total. Our typical adult guest was 24 years old, African American and pregnant. The average length of stay was 125 days. 50% of our guests had experienced intimate partner violence in the last year; 20% spent time in foster care during their childhood; 40% had a mental health or developmental disability.

In 2017, guest outcomes were as follows:

* 100% of families transitioned from Lydia’s House into stable housing[[2]](#endnote-2)
* 100% of families got connected to mental health or counseling services
* 100% of families enrolled in needed government supports including Medicaid and child care vouchers
* 90% of families stabilized physical or mental health or received needed medical care and respite
* 60% of adult women were pregnant and received prenatal care and post-partum support
* 50% of adult women completed a job training or certification program with the goal of increased income

In addition to providing housing and support for families in our main property we also provided aftercare services and support for 15 families. Among the ways we supported these families were

* emergency financial assistance and budgeting
* transportation to appointments
* furniture, home goods, food and pantry products
* post-partum care and support
* access to our laundry facilities
* healthcare advocacy and accompaniment
* access to professional counseling
* tutoring and school support for children
* emergency and respite childcare
* engagement opportunities including fields trips, camps, holiday and birthday parties
* monthly worship services, spiritual support and community meals
* relationships, friendship and community

**Trends and Changes:**

* Average age is going down
* More focus on pregnancy and health stabilization
* Emphasis has moved from quickly acquiring work and market rate housing to building a stronger network of support, getting connected to needed resources, enrolling in job training and moving into subsidized housing
* With Occupational Therapy, more emphasis on individualized goals and tracking outcomes
* The length of stay has shifted slightly up from previous years; more forgiveness and less truncated stays
* Housing placement has always been high but we’re also seeing better housing stability over the long run
* Our intake has become more precise and, as a result we extend more privileges and freedom to guests immediately upon entry; also quicker turnover of rooms and more guests served

1. COPM is the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure, ACE is a scoring system for Adverse Childhood Experiences, VI-SPDAT is a vulnerability index that allows us to understand the likelihood of housing stability, and VESTA is a regional tracking system that is widely used by Cincinnati providers of homeless services [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Stable Housing is defined as either with a supportive family member of their choosing or into an apartment with their name on a lease [↑](#endnote-ref-2)