

# RENT IS RISING AND SO ARE WE

Northeast Ohio
Coalition for the
Homeless
2022 Annual Report



#### **OUR VISION**

Everyone has a safe and stable place to call home where they can also embrace their own power and dignity.

#### **OUR MISSION**

NEOCH exists to eliminate the root causes of homelessness while loving our diverse community through organizing, advocacy, education, and street outreach.



# **2021 AWARD WINNERS**

Each year, NEOCH honors those that have demonstrated exemplary commitment to ending the root causes of homelessness in our community. We have presented awards to volunteers, elected officials, city leaders, lawyers, organizers, street outreach workers, service providers, and more.

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

#### United Residents of Euclid Beach and Morelands Tenant Group

This year, we are dedicating the Social Justice Advocate of the Year Award to two tenant groups for their courageous work building power and organizing. The Morelands Tenant Group's historic organizing work successfully held E&M Management accountable for building conditions and paved a path for future residents. The United Residents of Euclid Beach's tireless fight to save their community against displacement by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy is a powerful example to all of Cleveland. These tenant-lead organizations have rightfully rattled all landlords in our community and demonstrated courage, generosity, and leadership to the city of Cleveland.



Mark Oprea/ Cleveland Scene

### HOMELESS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR REACH Youth Action Board

This group of young adults with lived experience of homelessness organized to select, secure, and defend a safe and affirming place for unhoused youth in our community, even in the face of powerful opposition. With courage and determination, they were able to educate and mobilize allies within the community, leading to the support of the youth drop-in center by the block club and approval by the zoning board.





#### **EDUCATION**

- Published 4 issues of the Cleveland Street Chronicle, a street newspaper that is written, purchased, and sold by a dozen vendors with lived experience of homelessness. The Cleveland Street Chronicle published its 3rd annual "Wrap Up Homelessness" edition featuring wrapping paper designed by people with lived experience of homelessness.
- Presented 10 webinars for 715 people including social workers, shelter staff, service providers, and community advocates. These webinars focused on criminalization and the root causes of homelessness, traumainformed practices, and the experiences of unhoused queer and transgender individuals.
- Hosted 2 advocacy teach-ins for housing advocates, informing the public on renters' rights and the Homeless Bill of Rights, inspiring action from the community to push for policy change.
- Lead 2 guided tours for 53 people, as a part of our signature education

- series, Root Causes of Homelessness, to learn about our community's history of segregation, redlining, disinvestment, and gentrification.
- Facilitated immersive learning experiences for groups of students from six K-12 schools and 2 universities, where tomorrow's leaders dove into the realities of poverty and the root causes of homelessness, such as systemic racism and the commodification of housing.
- Worked closely with Xavier University students to study the rhetoric of poverty, design campaigns to shift false narratives, and produce the Street Voices podcast series.
- Educated faith communities, volunteer groups, and classrooms on what it's really like to be unhoused, with visits from Street Voices speakers and NEOCH staff
- Hosted a retreat for leaders with lived experience of homelessness to craft an analysis of their experiences, explore writing, photography, public speaking, and other ways to tell their stories.

#### STREET OUTREACH

- Ill unique individuals were accompanied from homelessness to permanent housing.
- 239 people were assisted in obtaining identification, birth certificates, and social security cards.
- 330 people received crisis intervention services.
- Hosted the seasonal shelter collaborative, creating a space to coordinate efforts and ensure safety for those who are unhoused during the coldest time of the year.
- By the end of the winter season in early 2022, unhoused folks spent a total of 1,731 nights in seasonal shelter with over 50% of program participants exiting into permanent housing.
- During the 2022-2023 season, 406 people were referred by NEOCH with a total of 6,759 nights spent in seasonal shelter.
- Responded within 48 hours to all 488 calls from the community concerning people experiencing homelessness in throughout the year.

- Hosted 22 Cleveland outreach collaborative meetings to coordinate and improve services for those living on the streets.
- NEOCH's Queer Youth Outreach and Engagement Manager, Carey Gibbons, was honored with the 2022 Heritage Day Award in Public Service by the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland and the City of Cleveland.
- Outreach Worker, Dennis Ashton, received the Legend/Leader Honoree Award from the Linking Partnership Opportunities Foundation, Inc. in collaboration with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.®, Lambda Phi Omega Chapter.
- Provided short-term supportive housing under the HOPWA program for people with HIV/AIDS experiencing homelessness. This allowed HIV+ individuals with compromised immune systems to access safe, temporary shelter while in the process of accessing permanent housing.
- 41 people living with HIV received interim housing.
- 63% of HOPWA program participants exited into permanent housing.





#### ORGANIZING

- Hosted 8 voter registration events at various shelter and meal sites throughout Cleveland in partnership with Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, YWCA of Greater Cleveland, West Side Catholic Center, and Catholic Charities.
- Hosted 20 community Homeless
   Congress meetings to promote
   leadership development and
   organizing capacity within Cleveland's
   unhoused community. Homeless
   Congress met with Mayor Justin Bibb
   and other city council members to
   discuss the Homeless Bill of Rights and
   ensure that our public officials are
   meeting directly with unhoused folks to
   understand the reality of homelessness
   in our community.
- Hosted the 2022 Homeless Memorial in partnership with St. Paul's Community Church UCC to honor the lives of the 55 community residents with lived experience of homelessness who passed away in 2022.
- Supported the formation of the United Residents of Euclid Beach tenant union (UREB) to protect 139 households from being forcefully displaced by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

- Supported organizing efforts against the construction of a new 2 billion dollar jail on a former Standard Oil refinery site.
- Supported the creation of 4 tenant councils in subsidized buildings to build power for residents to address conditions and concerns.



Mark Oprea/Cleveland Scene

#### **ADVOCACY**

- Canvased over 1,000 lowincome renters in eviction-heavy neighborhoods to inform them of their rights and available resources.
- Worked with tenants and elected officials in the City of Cleveland and Warrensville Heights to successfully pass Pay to Stay legislation to protect renters from eviction in nonpayment of rent cases.
- Trained over 300+ renters in tenant rights and organizing strategies.
- Canvassed with Mayor Justin Bibb to show current housing conditions in Cleveland and the desperate need for housing justice.
- Advocated for making Pay to Stay legislation permanent in municipalities with expiring legislation, resulting in permanent Pay to Stay legislation in 8 municipalities across Cuyahoga County, including Lakewood, Euclid, South Euclid, Maple Heights, Cleveland Heights, Newburgh Heights, Warrensville Heights, and the City of Cleveland.
- Under the leadership of young adults with lived experience of

homelessness, NEOCH organized neighborhood support in Ohio City to host community conversations and send letters of support for a zoning variance to create a youth drop-In center at 4100 Franklin Blvd. This center is the first of its kind in Cleveland for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. A variance for the project was granted in early February 2023.

- Conducted a care response survey of 177 people with lived experience of homelessness, in collaboration with the non-profit research institute, Policy Matters Ohio.
- Through organizing community forums and meetings with public officials, NEOCH put the desperate need for care response on the map in Cleveland.
- Helped cocreate and promote the People's Reentry Assembly as a part of Reentry Week. We facilitated conversations led by community members with lived experience of homelessness about the challenges and potential solutions in attaining safe, stable housing as a returning citizen.

Photography Bureau/City of Cleveland





**ANTI-RACISM** COMMUNITY **COMPASSION AFFIRMING DIGNITY** TRAUMA INFORMED RADICALLY INCLUSIVE **GRACEFULLY ACCOUNTABLE SUSTAINABILITY PRO-LGBTQ SOLIDARITY INTEGRITY JUSTICE LOVE** 

Stephanie Thomas

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## **REVENUE & EXPENSES**

#### **REVENUE**

CONTRIBUTIONS \$280,846.97 FOUNDATION GRANTS \$317,700 EARNED REVENUE \$178,188.45 SPECIAL PROJECTS \$194,913.93 GOVERNMENT GRANTS \$342,580.19 EVENTS \$33,887.51 MISCELLANEOUS \$384.69

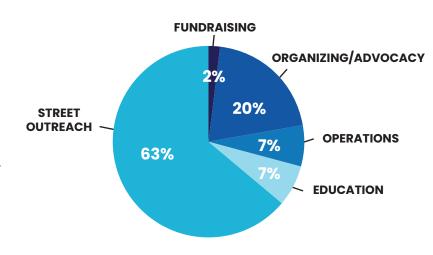
**TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,348,501.74** 

# EVENTS MISCELLANEOUS (<1%) EARNED REVENUE 3% CONTRIBUTIONS 13% 21% SPECIAL GRANTS GRANTS GRANTS

#### **EXPENSES**

ORGANIZING/ADVOCACY \$286,204.12 EDUCATION \$106,450.78 STREET OUTREACH \$903,772.97 OPERATIONS \$105,011.56 FUNDRAISING \$33,098.61

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,434,538.04** 



# **STAFF & BOARD**

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Megan Crow -Director of Development and Communications Dmitri Ashakih - Communications Coordinator

**Ohio City Neighborhood Street Outreach Worker** 

Molly Martin - Advocacy Liason Veronica Bennett - Office Assistant

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#### **INTERNS**

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# Remembering George Hrbek



NEOCH mourns the loss of one of its co-founders, Reverend George Hrbek. George was born June 20th, 1931, in New York City. He died at home in Cleveland on February 19th, 2023, surrounded by his family. George, alongside other comrades, founded NEOCH in 1989, as the successor to the Emergency Shelter Coalition.

George's vision of NEOCH was clear: establish a community watchdog organization to hold our public systems accountable for providing dignified care to people experiencing homelessness in our community. Rev. Hrbek made a life in Cleveland by working creatively within public systems to create change, both as a community activist and in leadership positions at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry and for the county.

Before moving to Cleveland in the 1970s, George built a white antiracist spiritual community in Chicago as a Lutheran minister during the Civil Rights Movement. During the Denison UCC and Metanoia public actions in 2019, George worked with NEOCH to organize a protest in response to the cease and desist threats made against Denison UCC for providing overnight hospitality to unhoused people on cold winter nights. While 80 of NEOCH's supporters rallied outside Cleveland City Hall, George pitched a tent inside with Rev. Nozomi Ikuta and others until the city's Safety Director agreed to meet with NEOCH on Christmas Eve.

NEOCH remains a strong coalition with a clear vision because of George's conviction to end the root causes of homelessness, and the coalition was fortunate to work with George well into his 90th year of life.

# Thank You to Our Sponsors...

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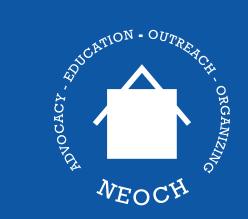
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#### **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

The Community West Foundation and their SocksPLUS program. Their dedication to this program and to people experiencing homelessness helped us distribute more than \$121,949 worth of necessities to people experiencing homelessness in our community.

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