



# Keeping Families Together



Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services Annual Report 2012



Shannon Steene

Dear Friends,

The economic uncertainties of the last several years have been hard on many of us, forcing us to tighten our budgets and create contingency plans.

Imagine what it must be like for parents raising children who are faced with homelessness. It is chaotic. They have the added stress of trying to keep families together, ensuring that their children attend school, and caring for family members' chronic illnesses.

That is why we at Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services believe that preserving affordable housing is of utmost importance. It is critical to get families into a safe environment that can allow them to reclaim the routines of daily living.

On the following pages, meet Nonya, Sabrina, and Isabel and their families. Our housing units are a first stable stop for these families, and many others. In the last year, we have worked with more than 600 families who have tried to rent on their own but who have faced credit problems or other life crises that made day-to-day living a struggle.

In addition, you'll read about our other accomplishments. As an executive director, I'm honored to be working with such a committed and engaged board and a smart and hard-working team of professionals.

We owe every one of our successes to you. For each family that is now in one of our housing units, there are many of you — behind the scenes — who have made that transition possible. Your donations and volunteer hours help us stabilize lives and keep families together. But our work is far from over.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Steene'.

Shannon Steene  
Executive Director  
Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services

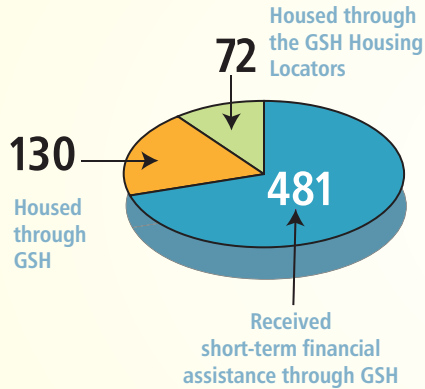
**In 2012 we celebrated these major accomplishments:** Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services successfully housed 683 families. ✨ We were able to permanently preserve three affordable housing units this year. 607 donor households supported our work. ✨ Our board of directors received the Center for Nonprofit Advancement's Outstanding Board Leadership Award for "effective risk management, commitment to annual giving, and investment in strategic planning." ✨ Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services received the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce's Nonprofit of the Year Award.

✨ We exceeded our goal of 4,000 walkers in the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon. Scott Pitts, head of our Housing Locator Network, received the Fairfax County Team Excellence Award. ✨ Housing Locators Paula Lewis and Nabiha Ettayebi more than doubled first quarter expectations for housing families. ✨ GSH spearheaded discussions with two local nonprofits to find ways to create greater efficiencies and minimize duplication of services.

**And we shared in the accomplishments of our clients as they moved their lives forward:** "Just wanted to thank you for all your help. Because of you I now will live again. Thank you." Helen & Duke ✨ "Wanted to thank you for helping us. You are truly Angels among us." ✨ "It is always a pleasure to help bring the good word in the community about what you do there. Really I do thank you all for all that you do for me and my family." ✨

## Homelessness hurts all of us, with social and economic costs to our community.

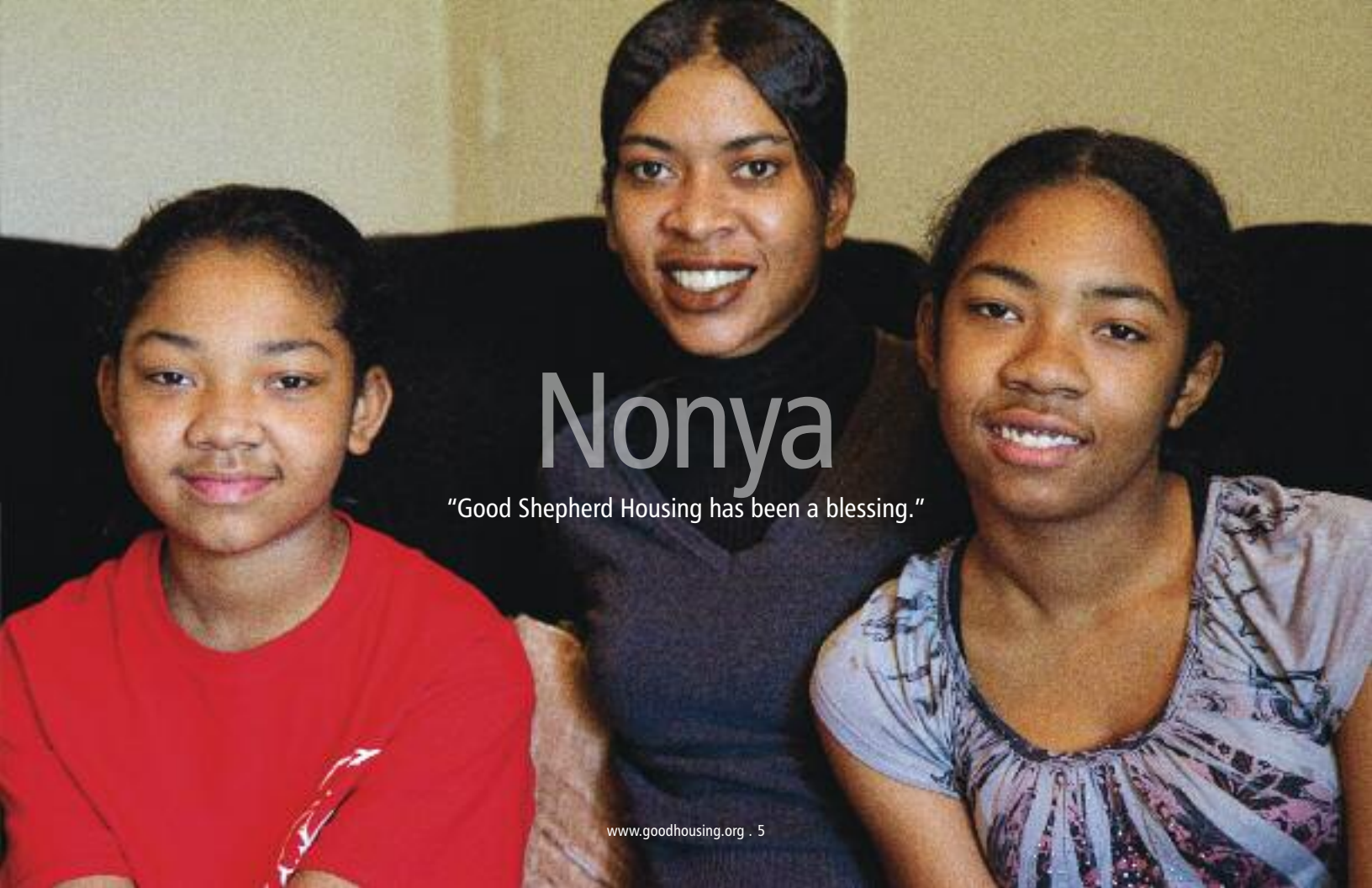
### 683 GSH Families Served



Many families living in poverty become homeless due to unforeseen financial challenges — a death in the family, lost employment, or an unexpected expense.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, homelessness among families is typically not a long-term experience. About 75 percent of families who enter a shelter are able to exit with little assistance and never return. Some families, however, require more intensive assistance.

One of the most important strategies for lifting families from homelessness is rapid re-housing. The more quickly families are connected with permanent housing, the faster their homelessness can be addressed and their lives can return to relative stability. Prevention strategies in the form of housing subsidies and one-time targeted assistance can help avert homelessness before it starts.



# Nonya

"Good Shepherd Housing has been a blessing."

Nonya's children are the center of her universe. The former personnel service specialist in the Army made enough money to find affordable housing, but her past credit history impacted her ability to secure a place to live with her two daughters, Marguerite, 14 and Mariah, 12.

"Most of the time when you are looking for a place to live, the people can be nasty and treat you like you're nothing," Nonya says.

"I've been working since I'm 14.

I'm not tryin' to get over on anyone." She was referred to Good Shepherd Housing (GSH) and met with Cherita, one of GSH's case managers. "Cherita was compassionate about the situation and friendly and helpful," Nonya remembers. "She let me know what the program does, took me around to show me one of the rental units."

During that time, Nonya sent her daughters to stay with her mother, in Nonya's childhood home of Peekskill, New York, while she remained in Virginia to work. Mariah suffers from a chronic digestive illness and was hospitalized for seven months. Nonya wanted to keep Mariah in New York where she received the specialized care and treatment she needed.



Nonya hated to be separated from her girls. She made a commitment to visit them every weekend, and did so for a year while they lived in New York. She drove from her job in Chantilly, Virginia to Springfield at 9:30 pm and waited four hours to take a bus to New York City. Then she'd walk three blocks to take another bus 40 miles to Peekskill. She'd return on the Sunday night bus, arriving in the morning, and headed straight to work.

In August of 2012, Nonya was able to move into a unit owned by Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services and reunite with her girls. Then, she was laid off from her job.

Mariah has been healthy since she reunited with her mother. She is active in sports and even made the honor roll — despite her lengthy hospital stay in New York and continuing health concerns. Nonya struggles to afford the better quality food that she needs for Mariah's condition. "Canned and processed foods are cheap, but trying to find organic food, fresh fruit, and better cuts of meat to keep her healthy is a challenge," she says.

Nonya is looking for a higher paying job in security. She plans to take a car-buying seminar and learn financial planning through GSH and hopes to own a home in the future. She contributes to her rent, and is also paying off hospital bills for her daughter.

Marguerite and Mariah are both “doing great.” Nonya found a local doctor for Mariah and is studying A+ computer certification. She hopes to take the exam soon.

“Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services helped us gain stability,” she says. “We were separated from each other as a family. It’s good to wake up and see my children every day.”

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Nonya’s passion is singing. She got her start DJing at a community club at Ft. Belvoir and got invited to a recording studio. She did back up and vocal arrangements and her career began to take off, doing demos for singers like Alicia Keyes. Nonya was nominated for a Decade Award and won best female R & B artist. While she loved the work, her family came first. A recording session took five hours and then she’d perform until 2:00 or 3:00 am. “It took too much time away from my kids,” she says. Now that her home life is more stable, Nonya plans to start work on a sample demo called “Chronicles of Nonya.”

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# Sabrina

"I'm not going anywhere ever again."



Sabrina was in a shelter for a year struggling to win custody of her daughter Jasmine before coming to Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services. Jasmine lived with Sabrina's ex-husband until he and Jasmine became homeless.

Sabrina was able to breathe again when she regained custody of Jasmine. "I'm blessed, and I love her." Since coming to Good Shepherd Housing, she's taken financial classes and had help with her resume. She was promoted at her job and moved to the late shift to make more money. She has benefitted from learning yoga and meditation.

Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services helped furnish their apartment and gave her daughter clothes and back to school supplies. They also helped her get a donated car to make her work commute more bearable.

It is still a struggle to make ends meet, but she's determined. Her older son lives with them and helps split the rent.

"I want to be stable enough to afford to take care of myself and Jasmine. She's been through a lot."



Sabrina's eyes twinkle and a shy smile breaks across her usually serious face when she talks about Jasmine's love for the outdoors near their apartment where she spots deer and beaver in the tiny pond nearby. She sits quietly, as if holding on to the image of her little girl who is once again able to enjoy her childhood.

"The first week that Jasmine was with me, she kept waking up and she is always holding on to me. I keep telling her, "I'm not going anywhere ever again."

**The costs of family homelessness are high for both individuals and communities.  
Sheltering a family long-term can cost between \$30,000 and \$55,000 per year.  
Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services offers a stable alternative to sheltering.**

*(Figures from National Center on Family Homelessness, April 2012)*



# Isabel

"I have a safe place for the children."

Isabel came to the United States from El Salvador twenty years ago and settled in Virginia to be close to her sisters and to find a job. She works as a school bus driver for the Fairfax County Public Schools and has also worked as a house cleaner and nanny.

She lived in an apartment, but when her daughter Iveth had surgery and couldn't work, Isabel was forced to take care of her three grandchildren. She had difficulties making ends meet and was recommended to a shelter. "At that point, I had nothing. One of the ladies I worked with would give me clothes, and even a Thanksgiving turkey. I was very sad. Other people should not support us."

When she moved to Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services, she had peace of mind about her grandchildren Herberth, Steven and Angel — three growing boys. "I am happy because I have a safe place for the children. I enjoy how they can play here and run. Because before, in the shelter, it was all of us in one room."

Right now, she says, it is still hard. She still has other daughters living abroad with whom she hopes to reunite. But, she says, she is grateful. Iveth is now looking for evening work. During a recent storm, Isabel volunteered to help families whose homes were flooded or without power. She and Iveth are learning about nutrition and teaching the boys about healthy eating.

"Every night, I give thanks that we are safe," Isabel says.

"I say: 'I am alive. I have food. A roof. Good people and friends. Always there is an answer for any difficulties if we look for help. There is a door.'"

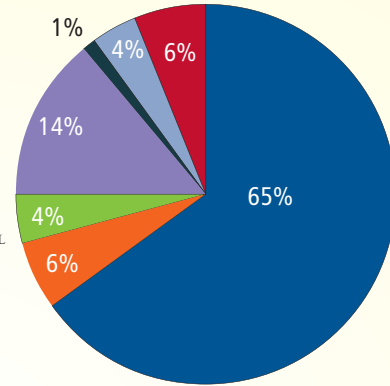


**Homelessness has particularly adverse effects on children and youth including hunger, poor physical and mental health, and missed school and social activities.**

*(National Center on Family Homelessness, April 2012)*

## 2012 GSH Expenses by Category Total Expenses \$2,387,913

- ABC RENTAL PROGRAM
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- HOUSING as TOP PRIORITY
- CHILDREN'S RESOURCES
- HOUSING LOCATOR
- MANAGEMENT and GENERAL
- FUNDRAISING

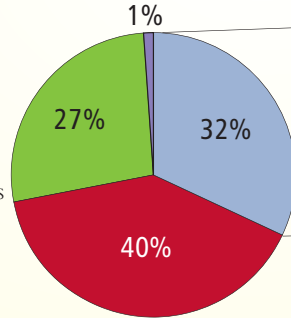


Lack of affordable housing is cited as the leading cause of homelessness among families with children, followed by poverty, unemployment, eviction, and domestic violence.

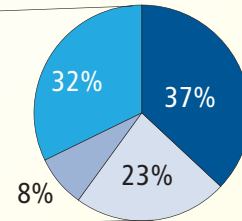
*(US Conference of Mayors 2012 Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness )*

## 2012 GSH Income Sources Total Revenue \$2,398,930

- FUNDRAISING
- RENTAL INCOME
- GOVERNMENT GRANTS
- IN-KIND DONATIONS & OTHER



What makes up fundraising?



- FOUNDATIONS/CORPORATIONS
- INDIVIDUALS
- RELIGIOUS/FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
- SPECIAL EVENTS

Donate now to help the Nonyas, Sabrinas, and Isabels of our community  
get a fresh start toward stable housing and the tools to create their own successful futures.

Call our development office at 703-768-9404  
to learn about our giving options or visit [www.goodhousing.org/donate.html](http://www.goodhousing.org/donate.html)  
to make a secure donation today.

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**In a community where need is so great,  
Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services' work is never done.**



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