

**2023 Report of Saint Francis Center to the  
137<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Colorado  
October 3-5, 2024**

*The mission of St. Francis Center is to offer refuge and peace for our community members who experience homelessness, helping them meet their basic needs and transition out of homelessness.*

**Executive Summary**

In 2023 the St. Francis Center (SFC) embarked on a new era with the retirement and celebration of Tom Luehrs as the director of the St. Francis Center for 30 years! SFC welcomed our new CEO, Nancy Burke in June and she hit the ground running by helping to close a construction project at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Federal and worked with SFC staff and board to assess and begin setting a path for our next phase.

2023 also brought the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Francis Center's work and ministry to those in Denver who are without homes, security and the resources needed to get back on their feet and into community housing. With the 2-pronged mission of the St. Francis Center highlighting safe emergency services needed for our houseless neighbors (outreach services on the streets of Denver, drop-in Day Center services offering a safe place to be 7 days per week) through to stable housing of soon to be more than 200 units of supported housing, along with employment and staff case management support to maintain housing. We actively provide a place of transformation for people who are homeless, and we have proven over the past 40 years that housing and stability are possible and the promise for every person we encounter. As our own Baptismal covenant professes, we strive for justice and peace in our agency and locations and we work to respect the dignity of every human being we encounter.

A major focus of concentration in 2023 was working with Denver's new city administration on all the systemic changes accompanying such a transition. SFC continues to focus on our core service offerings of safe emergency services for our unhoused neighbors, along with long-term resources of housing, employment and case management services. In December of 2023, SFC launched a new program for our agency as we became one of the non-profits operating a hotel as temporary shelter as an alternative to camping on the street as a part of Denver's House 1,000 initiative. This program has become a strong part of SFC's offering of safe emergency services and has assisted previously unhoused people with employment and transition to community housing.

**Community Impact:**

The pages that follow this summary are the center's annual report with details from 2022 and 2023 of how we provide community services and resources to more than 10,000 people annually through our six service locations. The Day Center continues to help hundreds of people every day with emergency services and with support to aid the transition out of homelessness. Diversified funding sources helped allow us to keep a full schedule of hours and program services available to meet what continues to be a growing need in the Denver Metro area.

**Collaborations and partnerships**

St. Francis Center continues to maximize resources by seeking partnerships with outside groups to provide services that we do not provide, including medical clinic serves, immunizations, substance misuse resources, mental health services and some basic service needs such as a laundry truck and access to the Division of Motor Vehicles identifications.

Another important collaboration comes in the form of volunteers who provide shifts in our programs each week, working alongside our staff. Across the agency there are the equivalent of eight full-time staff hours that are filled by volunteers. This represents over 16,000 hours each year for these volunteers. These volunteers boost the agency's ability to provide far more access to services and resources than would be possible if we relied on our limited staffing funding resources. Annually, SFC sees a total of 300 volunteers, and of those volunteers, approximately 85 people come and volunteer at least twice per month. Another group of volunteers of approximately 40-60 people come in at least once per month. It is simply a remarkable commitment and witness these volunteers provide to our houseless neighbors and to SFC's staff and board.

### **Future Plans**

In 2025, the St. Francis Center will open our third housing building owned by SFC with 60 units of housing for people who are exiting homelessness who are over the age of 55 and have a disabling condition such as a mental health issue, medical condition, or physical disability.

Over time, more than 200 housing units with embedded services and wellness programming for formerly homeless adults have been added to our continuum:

- Cornerstone Housing, 2009 - 50 units for adults over 55 years of age with disabling conditions
- St. Francis Apartments, Cathedral Square, 2018 - 49 units for adults with disabling conditions
- Warren Residences, 2021 – 48 units for adults with disabling conditions, located in a repurposed historic church
- Senior scattered site program- a 20-person housing support program for formerly homeless adults over the age of 55 in apartments across the community.
- St. Francis Apartments, West (opening in early 2025) – 60 units for adults over 55 years of age with disabling conditions.

**Housing is the solution** for people with disabilities and those who have lived on the streets and remains a need for our communities statewide. The St. Francis Center board of directors has made a commitment to evaluate our strategic plan to determine the best use of SFC's resources and knowledge to reach as many people as possible who are without homes and without a connection to community. Housing is one way to provide connection and stability to our homeless neighbors, however, there are many ways SFC can make an impact as we go forward into our next 40 years.

If you have thoughts or input on the St. Francis Center's direction and use of resources, please feel free to reach out to us at our information email address: [info@sfcdenver.org](mailto:info@sfcdenver.org) or email Nancy Burke directly at [nancyb@sfcdenver.org](mailto:nancyb@sfcdenver.org).