

Bethany House of Hospitality



Gratitude Report

October 2022 – October 2023



*Together
We Can
Make a
Difference!*

Bethany House...since the beginning

Since its founding in 2017 Bethany House has offered a safe home to 99 women with 36 children from 26 different countries of origin. In the beginning they were all young women who had arrived in the country as unaccompanied children and came to us from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shelters for children. Because they had no family or sponsors, when they turned 18 they would otherwise have been sent to adult immigration detention or a homeless shelter.

But the immigration situation changes constantly—who is arriving, where they come from, what are the greatest needs. Bethany House found it necessary to adapt with the times. In 2018, there was a call about an 18-year-old aging out of ORR custody with two young children. Soon after that, Bethany House hosted a family reunification of a mother and her baby who were separated for 7 months because of the cruel family separation policy in effect at the border at that time. They opened the door for other young women with children. In 2021, we received young women who had been part of the “Remain in Mexico” (MPP) program. They had each spent about two years waiting to enter the U.S.—and each had been kidnapped and held for ransom, sometimes more than once, while waiting at the Mexico border. That same year we also received young Afghani women who were separated from their families as they fled Afghanistan.

This past year, busloads of immigrants have been sent to Chicago (as well as New York and other cities) from Texas. More than 20,000 immigrants have arrived in Chicago since September 2022. Thousands have been staying at police stations and airports, awaiting shelter space, sleeping on the ground and counting on volunteers to bring food. It is not a safe place for any young woman, let alone one who has been traumatized or has a small child. Many calls this year have come from hospital social workers when they have a pregnant woman or young woman with a sick child ready to be discharged from the hospital and know it is not healthy for them return to camping near a police station.

Do we still receive women who are aging out of the government shelters for unaccompanied minors? Yes, we have never had to turn away these vulnerable young woman. About 25% of our new arrivals this year have been women aging out of ORR shelters throughout the country on their 18th birthday. They tend to stay at Bethany House a little longer while they work on English classes and a high school diploma or GED.



Since its founding in 2017, the Bethany House community has welcomed women from 26 different countries.

Message from Board President



Dear Friends and all who support Bethany House of Hospitality,

We are publishing our 2023 Gratitude Report in the midst of “the Season of Thanksgiving”. Thanksgiving is not just one day, but thankfulness lives in our hearts each day as we acknowledge all for which we are grateful. *“But feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it away.”* William Arthur Ward

There is a Vietnamese Proverb that says *“when eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree.”*

As we conclude our 6th year at Bethany House, we realize that there are many who have planted our tree(s) – and continue to do so. You are the planters of our trees by your care and support of the women and children who come to us seeking a new life. Women and small children who carry heavy burdens in their hearts, who have no place to call home. And because of all who support us in any way, we are able to offer them a place to heal and the opportunity to begin again.

“None of us, including me, can ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love and together we can do something wonderful.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Bethany House is our “something wonderful” and we thank you for being part of the reason that our women and children begin to live in a world of support, care, love, respect and peace. For six years, we have welcomed and sent forth women and children through the ministry of dedicated staff, volunteers, and many who have supported us from our beginnings in a multitude of ways. We are truly and deeply grateful.

On October 14, we lost our beacon, Sister Patricia Crowley, who planted a seed in our hearts to begin this ministry. Her passion for the plight of young, undocumented women, drew us into the dream of Bethany House and the support and care of many, helped us to make it a reality. Her light will always shine for us.

To each of you who have supported us in any way, we are so very grateful. You are a part of our ministry. You are a part of Bethany House of Hospitality.

Peace and all good,

Dolores Zemont, OSF

President, Board of Directors



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Remembering Sister Patricia Crowley, OSB

"Patsy was a light in the darkness. She carried the light of Christ within herself and she generously offered and gave that light to us and to all those to whom and with whom she ministered for so many years.... David Brooks, columnist for the *New York Times*, defines an illuminator as "one who makes others feel alive and understood, treating every person like they have a soul." Patsy was an illuminator and more.... In the spirit of St. Benedict, she welcomed and received all persons as Christ."

*Sister Mary Susan Remsgar, OSB
Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago*



Sister Patricia Crowley began the process that led to the founding of Bethany House of Hospitality with an invitation to people she thought would be interested in addressing the growing need for support of asylum-seeking young women emerging from juvenile immigration detention centers at age 18. It was her vision of Religious Communities as a group supporting the cause of justice for immigrants that has allowed young women to find a home at Bethany House, preparing them to thrive in their new life in the U.S. Her inspired invitation to leaders of Religious Congregations of Women in Illinois began a collaborative project that has provided a home and services to almost 100 women with more than 35 children.

In 2017, she led the effort to set up a nonprofit corporation, select a board of directors, find a house, and raise funds to open Bethany House. Her experience as executive director of the Howard Area Community Center and of Deborah's Place (providing housing and services to homeless women) served her well—as it has all the women who have come to Bethany House. As president of the board of Bethany House until 2023, she continued to hold the vision and share practical knowledge to help build an international community at Bethany House founded on a spirit of love and hospitality that seeks to create a sense of family.

Sister Pat or Patsy as she was lovingly known to so many, knew the power of collaboration. She knew religious congregations together could do much more than any one of them could do on their own. Her love for others coupled with an expansive vision of family and community—born of her own family and Benedictine community experience—has inspired many people to get involved and believe they could make a difference—together.

We thank you, Patsy, for your compassion, your talents, your creativity and vision, your ability to inspire others, and your love and care for those without a home in a new country.



Moments in immigration over the past year

The Biden administration explains its policy as both expanding channels for migrants to enter the U.S. legally, and increasing deportations of those who cross the border without permission

September 2022

Buses from Texas begin bringing immigrants to Chicago

January 2023

Humanitarian parole for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with U.S. sponsors

May 2023

End of Title 42 pandemic-era border expulsions policy

May 2023

Initiation of **asylum ineligibility rule**, barring most individuals from right to asylum at U.S. southern border

July 2023

Federal judge **blocked asylum ineligibility rule**

September 2023

Record number of **Venezuelans** (estimated at 50,000) crossed U.S./Mexico border in 1 month

September 2023

Expansion of Temporary Protected Status (**TPS**) for **Venezuelans** in U.S. since July 31, 2023

October 2023

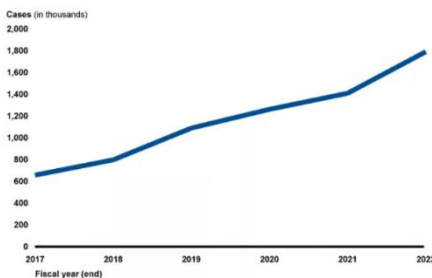
USGAO* reports more than 2 million pending asylum cases

* U.S. Government Accountability Office

Nearly half of those living at BHH at the time are eligible

Average asylum case in immigration court takes 4.25 years

Pending Cases in Immigration Courts, Fiscal Years 2017-2022



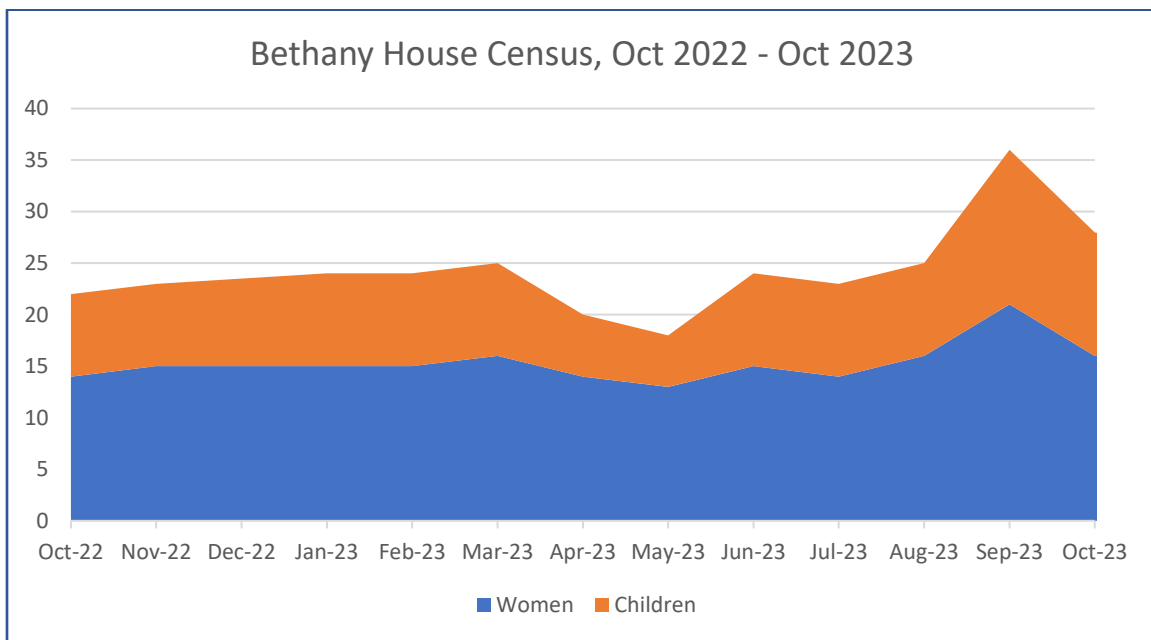
According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, as of October 2023 there are more than 2 million pending asylum applications in the U.S. There are 659 immigration judges throughout the country. (They would each have to make final determinations in more than 3000 cases—averaging 8.5 cases per day, 7 days a week, with no new immigrants being added—in order to “catch up” with pending cases.)

Since 2017 the number of pending asylum cases has grown each year.



Buses began arriving in Chicago in September 2022. Over the past year, more than 20,000 immigrants have arrived in Chicago. Thousands are staying in the airports or at police stations. For Bethany House it has meant that we have significantly increased the number of women and children we welcome.

Since October 2022 we had an average of 24 people in the house (women and children) each month (compared to previous year with an average of 15 people in the house each month). We had more children (up to 12 at a time) and more babies (3) born to women during their stay at Bethany House this year.



- April and May were marked by women with children moving out when they received work authorization and were ready for greater independence; September was marked by an unusual number of transitional stays—women moving out quickly to be reunited with family. Others came to fill the room within a day or two of a previous woman moving out.
- Since October 2017, Bethany House has been home to 99 women and 36 children. 36 of the 99 women (36%) and 21 children (60%) have lived at Bethany House during the past year (November 2022-October 2023).
- We have had more referrals from hospitals. When a pregnant woman or mother with a sick child is ready to be discharged and they cannot, for health reasons, return to a police station or outdoor tent, the hospital social workers call Bethany House to see if we have a room.
- The average length of stay has decreased from 10 months to 8 months. This is primarily due to several very short stays recently as women moved out to be reunited with family members arriving from the border.

Special Honors for Bethany House during the past year

The Mutual of America Foundation awarded the **Frances Hesselbein Community Partnership Award** to Bethany House of Hospitality, Viator House of Hospitality and The Young Center for their collaboration in support of unaccompanied immigrant children (those who arrive at the border without parents or family). The Young Center provides Child Advocates who advocate for the children and help with placement when they turn 18. Bethany House (for women) and Viator House (for men) provide a home for those turning 18 who have no family or sponsors in the U.S.



Holy Name Cathedral awarded Bethany House the first **Mother Cabrini Legacy Award**. The award, created by our friend Dr. Carol Christiansen, challenges us to continue to carry on Mother Cabrini's legacy of caring for those most in need, especially the immigrant.



Get Involved!

Decades-old immigration laws require asylum seekers to wait 6 months to a year (or more) to gain work authorization, leaving communities inside the United States to step in and help people get on their feet. The women coming to Bethany House want to work and help support the U.S. economy. Help advocate for the [Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act of 2023](#). The bill would shorten the current waiting period for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), otherwise known as a work permit, for asylum seekers from 180 days to 30 days provided that the asylum seekers entered the U.S. through an official port of entry.

Do you own [rental properties](#) or know friends who do? We are always looking for housing for the women ready to move out of Bethany House. Once they have work authorization and a job, they are ready to move to an apartment. But without a credit history, their possibilities are very limited. Would you be willing to give someone a chance?

Message from the Executive Director



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

-- Helen Keller

This quote, attributed to Helen Keller, is the philosophy on which Bethany House was founded and continues its mission. Helen Keller, though blind from a very young age, could see clearly the power of collaboration. Bethany House is all about *seeing* people who might otherwise go unseen and invisible to us.

Immigrants have not gone unseen in Chicago this year as they arrived by the busload daily. We may see them camped near police stations and along major roads. But truly seeing requires more than just sight; it takes *insight* to recognize the dignity of each person. Such insight moves us to action. Six years ago, Sister Patricia Crowley truly saw young women who had fled violence and persecution, aging out of shelters and being sent to adult detention centers, only compounding their trauma. She invited others to see what she saw...and Bethany House was born of compassion and action.

Six years later, Bethany House has been home to 99 young women with 36 children. Our circle of supporters now includes more than 35 religious congregations of both women and men, churches and partnering agencies, colleges and universities, and more than 750 individual donors. It takes all of us together to continue the mission of Bethany House to see and respond to vulnerable young women seeking asylum.

At Bethany House, young women are *seen* for who they are: each as an individual with a personal story and worthy of profound respect. Each one is a resilient survivor who has come so far—literally and figuratively—and holds potential for a bright future for herself, her children and the contribution she can make to this country. I am filled with hope seeing them grow in confidence and work together, sharing the responsibility to make Bethany House a welcoming home to the women who come after them.

Together we see and make a difference in women's lives. In this season of giving thanks, we are especially grateful to all of you who make Bethany House possible.

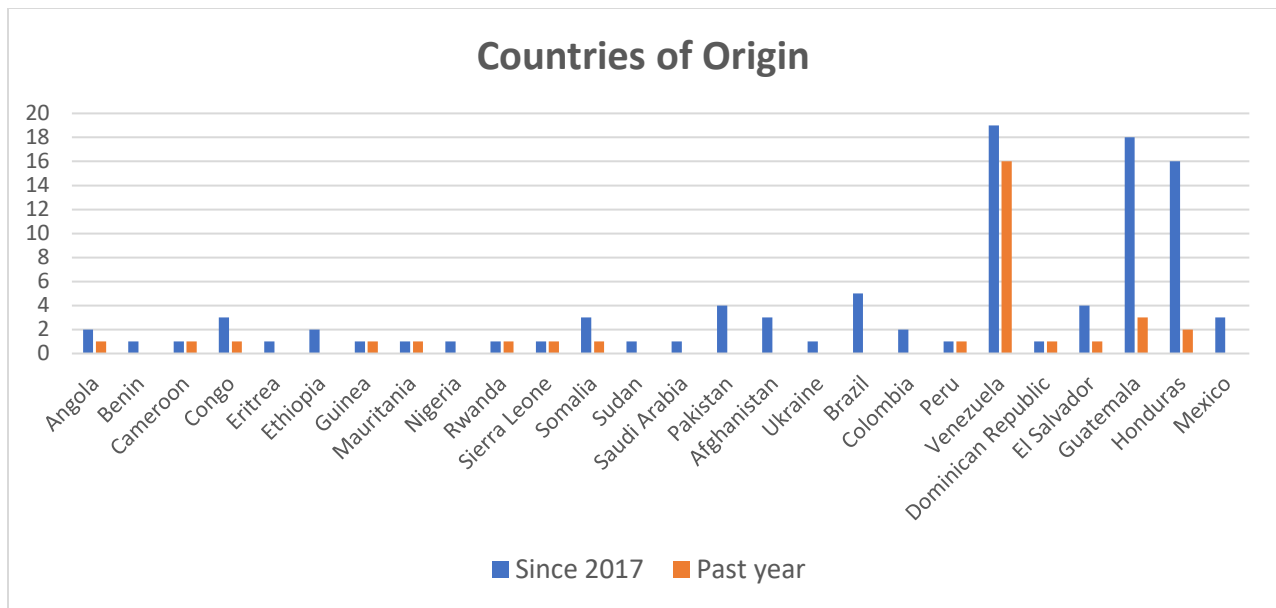
Kathlyn Mulcahy, OP



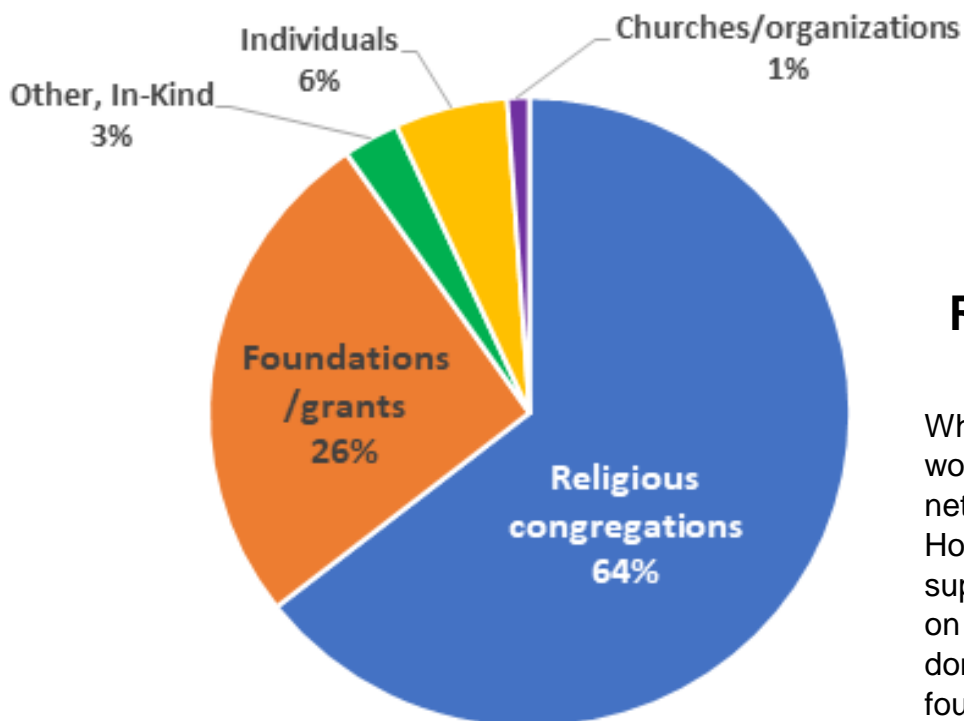
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Women from 16 countries were here during the past year. Almost half of the women at Bethany House this year were from Venezuela.



REVENUE

While religious congregations of women continue to be a vital network of support for Bethany House, providing both financial support and personnel, we count on a growing circle of individual donors, organizations and foundations to continue the mission of Bethany House.

\$50	Monthly cost for travel expenses for 1 person for 1 month
\$125	Food and household supplies for 1 person for 1 month
\$370	Annual cost for cell phone for 1 woman
\$550	Monthly cost for cell phones for all women
\$800	Weekly grocery bill at Bethany House
\$1180	Total Monthly Allowance (\$80-100 for each woman)
\$1200	Monthly cost for travel for all participants
\$1300	Internet/WiFi costs for one year for all participants
\$2080	Total expenses for one person for 1 month (\$70/day)

**Where
do your
contributions
go?**

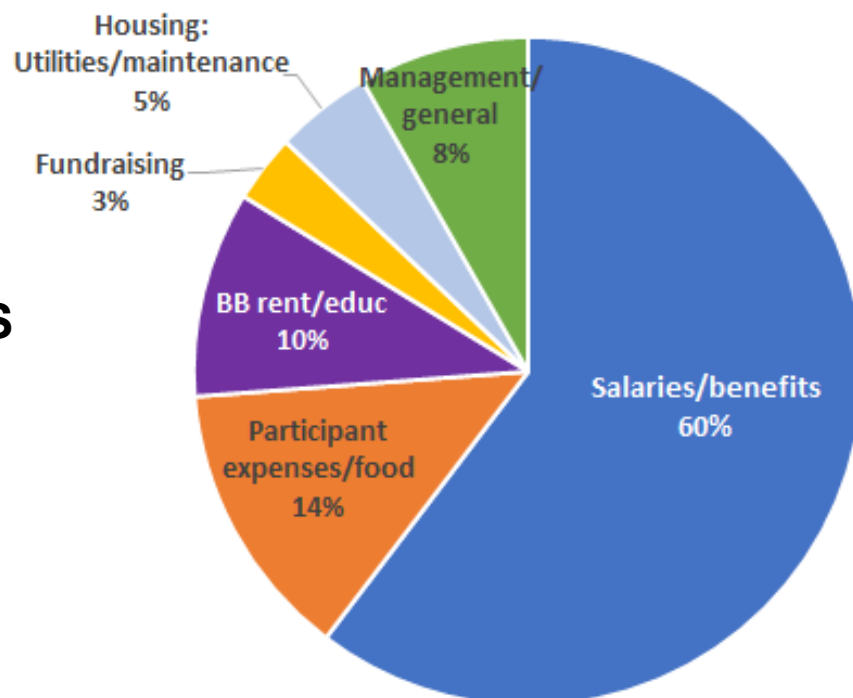
BEYOND BETHANY – *temporary support for women who recently moved to independent housing to help them begin to save and thrive in their new life*

\$4800 Total monthly rent supplements for 35 women in Beyond Bethany program

\$2000 One semester college tuition or career training program

We are also deeply grateful for all the in-kind donations, items from our Amazon Wish list, and the clothing, diapers, personal needs and household items collected for us at Bethany House. These items are not included in the totals above, but they contribute significantly to the warm welcome we can offer and to the women's sense of well-being after their traumatic journeys.

EXPENSES



Frequently Asked Question – FAQs

What has caused young women at Bethany House to flee alone to the U.S.? *Bethany House participants have experienced trafficking, rape, torture and other forms of violence to themselves and their family members forcing them to flee their homes.*

Are Bethany House participants here legally? *Yes, under U.S. law anyone can come to our nation and request asylum. Each young woman at Bethany House has permission from the government to be in the nation while her asylum case is being decided.*

How do Bethany House participants enter the country? *Most have entered at the southern border as minors and asked for protection. Some have come to Chicago on buses sent from border shelters in Texas. Some came after spending one or two years in Mexico in the “Remain in Mexico” program. Our Afghan participants were evacuated by the U.S. when their nation fell to the Taliban.*

What happens to a minor who comes alone to the U.S. seeking asylum? *Young people under 18 seeking asylum in the U.S. are processed at the border and sent to a government-funded home for immigrant minors. There, workers search for relatives to take the minor in. If she has no family with whom to live by her 18th birthday, the minor still must leave the program. Bethany House was founded to provide such women with a safe and supportive home.*

How do young women hear about Bethany House? *Attorneys or advocates working with them who know about BHH reach out to us when they have a client who needs housing. We have also received calls from hospitals, churches and the bus station about especially vulnerable young women.*

Does Bethany House accept young women who have already turned 18? *Yes. Bethany House has accepted young women who are 18 or older and living in dangerous or unhealthy situations.*

Does Bethany House accept children? *If a young woman comes with a child we will accept them together to keep the family united.*

Why are there so many single women with children? Where are the fathers? *Some of the women arriving at Bethany House pregnant or with children were forced to flee their home because their spouse or partner was killed or injured and the family was threatened. Sometimes the family traveled together from their country of origin but are not able to cross the border together. Some women are fleeing domestic violence by their partner or spouse. Some women find themselves pregnant when they arrive at Bethany House because of the assaults they endured on their journey.*

Can the children go to school? *Yes, the children who stay at Bethany House with their mothers are enrolled in Chicago Public Schools. Most of the children of the young women at Bethany House are too young for school, but this past year we have had children in special education, kindergarten, 1st and 4th grades. The younger children benefit from Headstart and Pre-Headstart classes through Bethany House’s partnership with Family Focus.*

Does Bethany House screen candidates? *Staff generally has a personal interview with the young woman as well as discussions with the attorney or advocate who recommends them to make sure the young woman doesn't have a history of violence or medical needs that we cannot meet.*

Does Bethany House turn young women away? *Unfortunately, at times we have had to turn women away, when we have no empty rooms or we cannot meet their medical needs.*

Are participants free to leave Bethany House? *Yes, participants are released on their own recognizance and can change their address at any time. Bethany House is not required to report their move to the government.*

Can the young women at Bethany House work legally? *Asylum seekers must wait until their asylum application is filed (up to a year from their arrival) and then wait an additional 150 days to apply for a work permit and wait again several weeks to receive it. Like U.S. citizens, participants with work permits pay taxes.*

What other services does Bethany House offer? *Each young woman at BHH has the opportunity to study, learn English, master basic living skills for life in the U.S., as well as access mental and medical health services. Bethany House also offers a safe place with a sense of community support and camaraderie among the participants.*

Do women stay at Bethany House until they receive asylum? *The wait for asylum is normally years. As of Spring 2023, there were more than one million asylum cases awaiting resolution. If denied asylum, a participant can appeal the denial. The average stay at Bethany House is just under a year. Most are ready for greater independence once they receive their work permit and find a job.*

How is Bethany House funded? *Bethany House is supported entirely by private grants, donations from religious congregations and faith communities, and more than 750 individual donors. BHH receives no government funding.*

How do volunteers support Bethany House? *Bethany House volunteers and student interns help participants adapt to life in the U.S. in many ways. They work directly with the young women to help them learn English, succeed in school, learn to use public transportation. Volunteers coordinate wholistic enrichment activities (like museum trips or piano lessons). They may help with grocery shopping or collection of needed supplies. They help women search for apartments and find community support when they are leaving BHH. Most importantly, volunteers become friends, helping to support young women as part of their "U.S. family."*

According to the American Immigration Council report in May 2023, the average asylum case in immigration court now takes 4.25 year from start through final hearing.

Profound gratitude to our DONORS who make Bethany House possible!

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* Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth

* Sisters of the Living Word

Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

* Sisters of the Resurrection

Society of the Divine Word

Society of the Sacred Heart

Society of the Sisters of Christian Charity

* Wheaton Franciscans

* denotes Sustaining Communities

These are the congregations of women and men religious who have supported Bethany House over the past year.

Many of them are Sustaining Congregations who give multi-year pledges of continuing support. Many have supported Bethany House with funding since its beginning. In addition to funding, congregation members serve as board members, staff and volunteers.*

We are deeply grateful to all of you!





From ALL of us to ALL of you...

