



2024 **IMPACT** REPORT





2024 was a year of both meaningful stability and forward momentum for HFH. We saw more families successfully move out of shelter and into permanent housing, a testament to the hard work of our many onsite programs and dedicated staff.

As our team grew to over 470 employees, we invested in professional development and focused on retaining our staff—resulting in a notable increase in the average length of staff tenure across HFH. This year also marked the expansion of signature programs, including the launch of a new hospitality course at Allie's Place Center for Culinary Education & Employment and the continued growth of HFH Summer Camps.

Behind the scenes, we focused on operational efficiency and using data more intentionally to inform decisions. Rather than spreading ourselves thin, we chose to strengthen our foundation, measure our impact, and reinforce the systems that guide our mission.

— John Greenwood, Executive Director



1,228
volunteer hours

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

1,653
families served
throughout the year

471
employees

423
move outs

391,018
total meals served



At HFH, our impact is driven by the dedication of our staff—those who work directly with residents and those who keep everything running behind the scenes. Within these pages, you'll hear some of their stories firsthand, along with the voices of the people and families we serve.

Notes from Our Administrators

We've seen significant growth across our programs this year, made possible by the tireless commitment and hard work of the entire Allie's Place team. Our culinary team launched the Hospitality course—a well-received initiative that has provided valuable skills and opportunities for its adult students. Children in our Pre-K and 3-K classes spent more time outdoors with activities like bike riding and gardening, and our Family Services team has also achieved remarkable success. We exceeded our goal by helping 92 families move into permanent housing in 2024.

— **Julissa Lantigua**, Senior Administrator, Allie's Place Family Residence



As a new site, Island has made major strides in how we serve families and the overall feel of our facility. In 2024, we worked on key renovations—from new flooring to enhanced recreation areas—that helped create a more inviting atmosphere. The children especially have loved the added play areas, and families feel the difference. Every faculty member has played an important part in making Island a place of care and belonging.

— **Lori Bowen**, Administrator, Island Family Residence

Since opening in November 2022, Clinton has grown tremendously. Through construction in 2024 and continuous upkeep by our maintenance team, it is a welcoming and secure space for families seeking stability and a fresh start. Our Recreation team fosters a sense of normalcy by organizing activities like BINGO, movie nights, arts & crafts, and holiday celebrations. Each department plays a vital role in Clinton being more than just a shelter; it is a community.

— **Nereida Santiago**, Administrator, Clinton Family Residence

Maintaining a safe, healthy, and well-operated facility would not be possible without colleagues who are committed to collaboration in achieving our shared goals. This past year, we tackled major infrastructure projects, and thanks to the strong coordination between our personnel and the Buildings team at the central office, these efforts ran smoothly. Their quick responses and teamwork made all the difference.

— **Alfonsina Gomez**, Administrator, Williamsbridge Family Residence



Our Family Services team helped many residents transition into permanent housing, and we saw these residents build friendships and encourage one another on their journey to stability. We're deeply grateful to every employee for their daily efforts to assist residents and keep Prospect thriving. We also added a new Director of Afterschool, whose fresh ideas and deep engagement with parents have strengthened the program and increased participation among the children.

— **Marisol Santiago**, Administrator, Prospect Family Residence

My vision is to create a warm and comfortable setting for anyone who walks through the door at Saratoga. While safety is always our top priority, we also want families to feel cared for and at ease. That means investing in the space, so it reflects the energy we bring to programs and uplifts families as they build toward their futures. I also hope to continue building a strong, compassionate team to work with our residents—when people feel empowered here, it lays a foundation to succeed beyond our doors.

— **David Morris**, Administrator, Saratoga Family Residence

Meet Our Staff Spotlights

HFH Staff Spotlights celebrate employees who consistently go above and beyond in their roles. Nominated by supervisors or colleagues, these individuals exemplify a strong work ethic, team spirit, and excellence within HFH. For more on their inspiring stories, visit the “What’s New” section of the HFH website.



“People come from different backgrounds and often carry a lot of weight on their shoulders. I like being their ear—the person that gets to listen to them. I always tell them, ‘You can come to me for anything,’ because sometimes they don’t have other people. I like being the person that can be there for someone else.”

— **Tiffany Diaz**, Case Manager, Allie’s Place



“To see people who are in an unfortunate situation ... to grow and have a different outlook on life, it makes it all worth it for me.”

— **Eric Smith**, Director of Building Operations, Prospect, and HFH’s longest-serving staff member



“When I came [to Saratoga], they turned my life around. For me, working motivates me to keep striving. I don’t look back at the past; I just look to the future.”

— **Michael Lewis**, Porter, Saratoga



“I want to show people the growth. I want people to know that it can happen for them. Just because you are [in shelter], doesn’t mean you can’t continue rising, as long as you have faith and don’t give up.”

— **Veronica Cubano**, Administrative Assistant, Williamsbridge, former Saratoga resident





A Peek Inside Family Services

Family Services is at the heart of our mission—providing the hands-on, holistic care that helps residents rebuild their lives. But because the work is deeply personal and often confidential, it doesn't always show up in photos or headlines. It happens in quiet conversations, behind office doors, and in moments of crisis or breakthrough. This crucial work is often unseen, but its impact is immeasurable.

The teams at each shelter work closely with residents to address a wide range of challenges, always focused on building trust and fostering connections. They work with individuals to navigate the complexities of housing, employment, and health care, offering guidance during the most difficult times. Whether it's guiding someone to stable housing, meaningful employment, or essential services, the team is there every step of the way. They build relationships with landlords, assist with job readiness, and provide a steady hand when support matters most.

These roles are demanding, but the team shows up every day with persistence and compassion—helping residents move forward with security, progress, and a sense of possibility.



“[The Family Services team has been] amazing; they’re great. They make me feel comfortable. And if I have any questions, they’re always there to answer them for me.” — Neidy, Mother at Clinton





Q&A WITH Elizabeth Castillo, Director of Family Services at Clinton Family Residence

How does the Family Services team ensure families feel sustained and empowered during their time in shelter?

When families arrive, they first meet with the Safety department to check-in, tour the building, and receive their personal care kit, before meeting with the Family Services team within 48 hours. That first meeting is crucial—we assess their situation and begin helping them move toward permanent housing. This process is called intake, and it is one of the most important steps in understanding how we can best serve each individual. Beyond that, we check in regularly, whether weekly or biweekly, depending on their situation.

Empowerment comes through encouragement. Living in the shelter system is not easy—it's a vulnerable position that can lead to feelings of hopelessness. We remind families that they can do this, that they will move forward—exiting shelter is just a step towards their independence and them taking control of their lives. We show them their options and provide guidance.

We also collaborate with the Recreation team on events where families can connect with others in similar situations. That fellowship makes them realize they're not alone. Seeing other families making progress can be a powerful motivator.

How does your team assist families beyond housing—addressing employment, well-being, and long-term stability?

We prioritize urgent concerns—like securing food stamps and cash assistance—before moving on to housing, employment, and childcare. We make referrals for medical care, therapy, and community resources. We also assist with job searches, resume building, and navigating benefits, especially for those who are new to the system or face language barriers. Ultimately, our goal is to provide families with the structure and support that helps them move forward, one step at a time.

Can you share a story about someone who found employment this year?

We had a woman come through intake while pregnant. One of our staff members asked about her skills and interests, and she shared that she was experienced in braiding hair.

Coincidentally, our Client Care Coordinator knows a salon owner who was looking to hire someone with braiding experience. We worked with the client to put together a simple resume highlighting her skills, connected her with the employer, and she got the job. She's still working there, and that role led to her securing a housing voucher.

What keeps you motivated in this work?

The families. Seeing them come in with so many challenges—whether it's domestic violence, eviction, or other hardships—and then watching them regain independence, that's what keeps me going.

One of the biggest rewards is when families trust us. At first, many are overwhelmed with questions and concerns. But when they realize we're here to help them, they open up. They start making progress. They come to us excited, saying, 'I finally did this!' or 'I got approved for that!' And that trust makes everything smoother—when they work with us, we can help them more effectively.

And when they move out? That's everything. Seeing a parent who came in escaping a difficult situation now living in their own home, running their own life—that's what makes this work meaningful. Knowing that we played even a small role in that journey is what keeps me going.



Allie's Place Center for Culinary Education & Employment

Allie's Place Center for Culinary Education & Employment offers free job-training—to HFH shelter residents and to the surrounding community—in Culinary Essentials, Pastry Arts, and expanded this year to include a Hospitality course, giving students even more career pathways, along with advanced workshops (like learning how to cook healthy meals for the family), employment assistance, and a network that continues to offer resources for up to a year after graduation.

"The biggest change I see, from day one to when the students graduate, is this confidence that just builds in them. We want to make sure they have all the skills that get them job-ready but having the confidence and believing in yourself is really the most important thing. You can have all the technique in the world but if you don't have that confidence, you're not going to be the most successful person you can be."

— **Gabriel Rodriguez**, Director of Culinary Education

"I'd like to thank the staff and my classmates at the Center for Culinary Education & Employment for supporting my goals, dreams, and career change from tattoo artist into the culinary field. Also, I'd like to give a shout out and a special thank you to Chef Greg—the coolest chef on this side of the solar system—whose humor and creativity gives each class a unique experience."

— **William**, 2024 Graduate

"There is one student who told me that when he was taking this class with me, he was homeless and sleeping in the park. He made it on time every day. Never complained. Just did it. Now, he has a job—he's at this hipster, trendy, amazing barbecue joint in Brooklyn. He has an apartment. He has a home and a little vegetable garden on his terrace. When they overcome it, it makes your day, absolutely makes your day."

— **Gregorio Pedroza**, Lead Chef Instructor



"Allie's has helped me ready myself for real world settings, both in the workplace and at home. I think overall, it's really contributed to my confidence, how I speak, how I move, how I present myself—knowing and feeling ready to just jump into any situation, whether it be meeting with a new employer or conducting something more independent. It's really made me feel that I am able—able and capable—to do whatever it is I set out to do, especially in a work setting."

— **Alexis**, 2024 Graduate

"I feel like Allie's Place has helped me grow a lot. While working here, I realized that—you know, everyone has different styles of learning—I realized my method of learning is teaching. I'm realizing as I'm teaching, I'm learning so much so quickly, and I wish I'd learned that sooner, but I'm happy that I had the opportunity to learn that here, because the more I'm able to take in, the more I can teach. So, I think that's really special, because it's the gift that keeps on giving."

— **Jayda Gabriel**, Chef, Pastry Arts Instructor

"Usually the kitchen is a fast-paced environment, so with the training that Allie's Place provides, it gave me an expectation of what I am going to be doing when I get a job and prepared me for it. If nobody else has the experience I have, I can guide them. It is a really nice place to learn if you are interested in the culinary arts."

— **Lucas**, 2024 Graduate

"I think having a kid [got me into culinary.] Wanting my son to eat healthier, and having the best options for him, made me want to explore cooking, and that's what kind of opened the door. I love cooking in general—it brings me joy."

— **Angelica**, 2024 Graduate

2024 BY THE NUMBERS:



138 graduates

61% of unemployed graduates found employment in 2024



HFH Summer Camps

In the 2024 HFH Summer Camps season, campers enjoyed outdoor activities like basketball, frisbee, and canoeing, took part in community service, and explored arts, sports, and nature. New this year was an outdoor adventure challenge, where campers learned foundational skills like setting up tents and navigating obstacle courses through teamwork. Traditions like making s'mores, celebrating holidays, and the end-of-camp Carnival—featuring games, face painting, and sweet treats—made for an unforgettable summer.



“When I first came to this camp I did not know how to swim, and now I am a really strong swimmer.”

— **2024 Camper**

“I think what sets us apart is our mission to make sure that the kids have the whole experience. We provide these activities for them, but we also provide love and care and this family culture—we eat as a family, we cheer as a family, we have evening programs as a family, we do everything as a family at this camp, and I think that is what sets us apart. We put emphasis on love and care.”

— **Shawn Thorns**, Camp Culture Manager

“I like camp because we get to meet all these cool teachers and unit leaders, and we get to see our cabins, and they are really cool. We get to stay up sometimes and talk about stories and play games.”

— **2024 Camper**

“I made a lot of friends, even in my cabin. When you go to each cabin all the girls are there, and they treat you nice.”

— **Jachbiany**, 2024 Camper

“It’s fun—we have swimming every day, and the counselors are nice and funny. The last day was the worst day because we had to leave. Everybody was crying, including me.”

— **Marissa**, 2024 Camper

“It is very rare that city kids get to experience something so peaceful, something so out of their element, and I think it is good for them to not only see different communities but different cultures, because we have counselors from places all across the world. It just broadens their horizons, and it is a fun way to do so as well.”

— **Nalani “Nani,”** Music Specialist, previous HFH Summer Camps camper

“As the week goes on you see the growth, you see them participate in activities, you see their willingness to make new friends and take initiative and responsibility. I have seen so many campers change in the span of two days—just their willingness to try something [new]. The growth I have seen overall is just eye-opening and heartwarming.”

— **Tazion “Tizz,”** Unit Leader

“I feel like I can relate to them. I was in their shoes. I understand them. I am from the city. I was a part of HFH as a kid, so I feel like when someone is scared, or someone wants to go home and is homesick I am there, and I understand how they feel.”

— **Andrew**, General Counselor, previous HFH Summer Camps camper



2024 BY THE NUMBERS:



71 campers



116 volunteer hours



2,118 meals served



Afterschool & Recreation

Afterschool & Recreation provides children, ages 5-16, with homework help, enrichment programs in STEAM, sports, and leadership, plus field trips and activities tailored to their interests—all within a setting where students feel a sense of belonging and pride in their program. Highlights of the year include field trips to see the Radio City Rockettes—which included a backstage tour—and a tour of JFK airport; Lego robotics and visits from critters and creatures like owls, snakes, chinchillas, and a bearded dragon; Teen Nights at Allie's Place, where youth enjoyed outdoor movie screenings just for the teens; an engaging production of the Evolution of Hip-Hop at Saratoga; and an action-packed Field Day at Prospect filled with team spirit and games like tug of war.



"We've seen a lot of our kids grow socially—they started out shy and timid and then started opening up and allowing their peers to get to know them. They're like a little family almost; they like to check on each other, make sure everybody's OK if they're having trouble with something, they want to help each other. They've gotten better at not just looking at what 'I' need but what others need as well."

— **Giovanni Yapor**, Lead Teacher, Prospect

"We have freedom to say what we want ... like responsibly ... like freedom to responsibly say what we want."

— **Sam**, Saratoga Afterschool & Recreation Student



"My favorite part about afterschool is dance because I get to express my feelings."

— **Victory**, Saratoga Afterschool & Recreation Student

Recreation at Clinton, Island, and Williamsbridge offers families a welcoming place to connect and participate in activities for the entire family. From carnivals and back-to-school events to photography and cooking classes, they spend time outside their rooms and engage with one another and other families.



“We host movie nights where families can come down, pick a movie, and just relax. Yes, you’re living in a shelter, but it gives you a chance to take your mind off things. If you’ve had a bad day, you can come down, do some art, watch a movie—we have all kinds of activities to help you feel a sense of normalcy. Sometimes kids come just to talk. And while they’re doing art, I’ll chat with their parents. It’s a judgement-free space.”

— **David Diaz**, Family Assistant, Island

“It’s nice that the staff hosts little events. [My son] has fun, and he gets to play with other kids, so it’s a win-win for everybody. He didn’t expect any of the activities, the food, everything. It’s a surprise, so he is having a good time. He can’t wait to start school; every day he asks me, ‘Is it today?’ He didn’t have any supplies yet. It comes in handy—all of this—it helps the parents.”

— **Mother at Williamsbridge Back-to-School event**



“I hope that families just have good experiences here. They didn’t ask to be in this situation, but it’s harder to understand when you’re a kid. It’s important to offer this space where they get to come in and make friends and play games, and when they leave here, take that memory of ‘Yeah, we weren’t in the best situation, but I had a great time when I was there.’ I just want to be able to be that support system for them.”

— **Yasmeen Joyner**, Recreation Supervisor, Williamsbridge



Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education Centers are staffed by NYC Department of Education-certified teachers and create a nurturing environment for Pre-K and 3-K children—both in the shelter and from the surrounding neighborhood. Each day includes engaging activities like the Question of the Day, feelings check-ins, social play, family-style meals, circle time, outdoor play, structured activities, and individualized attention, all designed to foster emotional, social, and physical development. The kids had an action-packed time with special visits from the National Enrichment Group, who got them stretching and stirring with yoga and cooking lessons; Super Soccer Stars brought the energy with fun-filled soccer sessions; and Bilingual Birdies turned up the music and movement while teaching them Spanish.





Q&A WITH Lisandra Santana, Director of Early Childhood Education at Allie's Place

How does Allie's Place Early Childhood Education Center nurture young learners?

It starts with the teachers. Our center brings together teachers, the director, families, and children in close partnership. We nurture our students by fostering strong, uplifting relationships where teachers engage closely with them, maintaining eye contact, listening, and validating their feelings.

We encourage autonomy, allowing children to make choices and discuss the impact of those choices. We have "cozy corners" to help them regulate emotions, and we ensure every child feels seen and understood. Validation isn't just for students—it extends to families too. A parent might be facing a tough morning, and we acknowledge that. Everyone's feelings matter here, and that's something visitors notice right away.

Have you seen a child make significant progress or overcome a challenge in 2024? What contributed to their success?

One child struggled with transitions, particularly separating from their parent in the morning. Uncertainty about what came next triggered anxiety. Through consistent routines and working closely with the parents, we helped them adjust.

At first, the parent kept the child home to avoid the distress, but we had conversations about how consistency is key. Over two months, the child learned to trust the routine, and by the end of the year, they confidently transitioned on their own. Seeing that growth was incredibly rewarding.

What is one thing about the program this year that makes you especially proud?

Everything! 2024 was a year of growth. We added a lead teacher to the classroom, which made a huge difference. Seeing the children transform over the year—from unsure and unfamiliar to confident and engaged—fills me with pride.

I'm also proud of my team. The three teachers work seamlessly together, providing a high-quality educational setting. And the biggest sign of success? The kids came in happy every day, knowing this was their place.

In what ways does your staff go above and beyond for not just the children, but their families as well?

We work closely with the Department of Education—including our instructional coordinator and our social worker—to discuss each child's development and share ideas. One example stands out: our instructional coordinator suggested sight words for a child showing early reading readiness. Within hours, my teachers had laminated, cut, and assembled a sight word binder for the child, then sent it home for the parents.

The parents were thrilled, and the child had the guidance they needed right away. That level of dedication—seeing a need and immediately acting on it—is what makes our team special.



Can you share a moment from this year that captures the program's impact?

A parent from last year returned to tell us, 'You really supported her—she's now at the top of her grade.'

This child had been incredibly shy, not speaking for a whole month when she started. But through our daily encouragement, she grew into a confident student. Seeing her mother come to us to share her grades, filled with pride, was a reminder of why we do this work.

"I like the [Early Childhood Education] program; they care about my kid. He likes the school. He always says 'I want [to wear] my backpack, I want to go to school'—he likes to be here. I really liked the progress from it; he has learned a lot. The teachers are very nice; I can ask them anything, and they are always available."

— Parent of child enrolled in Saratoga Early Childhood Education Center





BEHIND THE SCENES: The Essential Departments Keeping the Lights On

While the frontline programs provide direct services to families, none of this would be possible without the passionate teams working behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly. Human Resources recruits, onboards, and enables HFH employees to thrive in their roles. Drivers work with Administration to maintain seamless coordination across shelters, transporting kids on field trips, residents to appointments, and essential items—including donations—between sites and the central office. The Safety department ensures residents and employees are secure across the boroughs.

The Buildings department oversees the daily operations and supports maintenance personnel at our six shelter sites across New York City and HFH Summer Camps in Harriman State Park, providing families and kids with a clean, functional, and safe place to call home (and camp!). The Finance department handles budgeting, accounting, and purchasing, making sure that resources are allocated effectively to facilitate programs and services.

These teams, and many others working behind the scenes, play a vital role in our mission—creating the foundation that allows frontline staff to provide life-changing services to families. 2024's inside look showcases the Finance and Buildings departments, and we look forward to featuring more departments in 2025.

“We’re the first faces clients see when they come in and the last when they leave, so they come to us for everything—even things outside our job description. They trust us because we’re always here, and that builds a relationship. I’ll often have to redirect them to the right person, like a case manager, but I always let them know I’m here to support them however I can.”

— **Lorraine Bradley**, Security Operations Manager, Prospect



Q&A WITH Carlos Santos, *Controller*

What would you consider the key responsibilities of the Finance department?

Finance’s key responsibility is to accurately record and process all funding sources in a timely manner. This allows us to provide financial data to senior management so they can make informed decisions. Our work helps make sure that the shelters have what they need, programs run efficiently, and salaries are paid correctly. Ultimately, we provide the financial foundation that keeps the agency running.

How does your department work with other teams to serve the organization’s mission?

We work closely with other departments to ensure every dollar is used effectively and within its designated purpose. This creates a better understanding across the organization of when and how funds can be spent.

What is something Finance accomplished this year that you’re especially proud of?

Finance is one of the largest departments at HFH, and we touch a little bit of everything. One of our biggest achievements has been transitioning to a more digital workflow. We’re now about 90–95% digital, which is a huge step forward. No more digging through crates and basements for paperwork—we’re keeping up with the times.





Q&A WITH Eric Leff, Senior Project Manager

Can you walk us through a typical day in the Buildings department?

In Buildings, there's no such thing as a typical day. We're constantly communicating across teams, checking in on our buildings, and handling both short- and long-term projects. Mornings often start with handling emergencies, like leaks, elevator issues, or security concerns. For example, if a security director's cameras go down, we jump in right away—making service calls, coordinating approvals, and ensuring the work gets done. Beyond emergencies, we focus on building improvements, compliance (meeting regulatory requirements), and keeping everything running smoothly.

How does the Buildings team work with other departments so that everything runs efficiently?

We collaborate with Finance daily—whether it's vendor setup, compliance, or payments. We also work hand in hand with programs, especially on facility-related needs. We are in direct contact with management at each of the shelters to assist with any projects, small or large. Any camp improvements? We're involved in that, too.

What keeps you motivated in your work?

We're all here for the same reason. We're here to help the families and kids and make sure that they are safe and have a bed to sleep in. Even small improvements—like fixing a facade or upgrading offices—can make someone's day in ways we don't always realize. Of course, there are challenges, but we're providing people with shelter. It's easy to take things like running water for granted, but for many, these necessities make all the difference. At the end of the day, it's about coming together and supporting each other—that's what HFH is all about.





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