

## MATS Annual Report 2021

*The Monadnock Area Transitional Shelter's mission is to provide transitional housing, support and referral services to people who are experiencing homelessness; to educate our community on issues of homelessness; and to advocate for possible solutions.*

MATS had a challenging, but productive 2021. Even with the return to near-normalcy as the pandemic wound down, the challenges were substantial. First and foremost is the challenge of assisting the individuals and families that come to us for help. In 2021, we received inquiries from 110 different individuals or families; most through referrals from schools, town welfare departments, and other social service organizations. Depending on [their](#) needs, some are given the opportunity to stay at the Shelter, while many more receive help with issues like budgeting, employment counseling, transportation, child care, medical care, government or private assistance of varying types that they might be eligible for, and resources for finding housing.

Six individuals/families stayed at the Shelter for periods of time ranging from three to eighteen months. Six children, aged one year to thirteen years, were among the guests. During their time with us, they were provided a clean, safe place to stay and the opportunity to work with our Program Manager to explore and work to resolve the varied reasons they became homeless, and to find the tools and resources they will need to get into permanent housing at the earliest possible time. We also keep in touch with former guests to make sure they are doing well after leaving the program. In 2021, we provided assistance to fifteen former guests who needed help with budgeting, employment, housing, and a number of other issues.

A related challenge is the severe shortage of affordable housing in the region, which is a major contributing factor to homelessness here. The shortage of housing, combined with low wages, means that it is nearly impossible for an unskilled worker to afford a place to live. And if that person is a parent with the additional costs of raising a child (or children) including day-care, or has any health or other issues that interfere with full-time work, the situation is even worse. Beyond being a prime factor in creating homelessness, the housing crunch also affects MATS by making it very difficult for our clients to transition into permanent housing when they are ready to do so: there is just nothing available in their price range. The few affordable (or subsidized) housing complexes in the area have few openings and long waiting lists. We urge everyone who cares about housing affordability and homelessness to join us in pushing our federal, state, and local officials to support housing initiatives that address the current housing shortages and allow and/or incentivize the construction of affordable housing in NH.

One step MATS has taken to deal with this lack of affordable housing is to purchase a second building and renovate it into two additional apartments, which we are using to house clients who are ready to transition to permanent housing but are unable to find anything. The renovations required for the house, including work to make it comply with current building codes, were more extensive than we had first thought, and rising materials prices and scarcity of labor meant the renovation process took an entire year and cost more than we had hoped. Thanks to your donations and a fair amount of free labor on the part of Board members and other volunteers, the building was completed and is currently occupied.

We greatly appreciate the support that MATS has received over the past year from individuals, businesses, and other organizations. It has enabled us to make a real difference in the lives of many of our brothers and sisters in the community, and has allowed us to remain financially sound and ready to carry on our mission through 2022 and beyond. If you are able to help, or want to learn more, visit our website at [www.MATSNH.org](http://www.MATSNH.org). Donations may also be mailed to MATS, P.O. Box 5033, Peterborough, NH 03458. To donate household items, please call 603-924-5033. To request shelter: Call the MATS office at 603-924-5033; email [MATS.peterborough@gmail.com](mailto:MATS.peterborough@gmail.com); or contact your town's welfare officer. For emergency shelter, dial 211.

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