



**Annual Report
2018**



**Deepening
Relationships,**



**Moving Beyond
Homelessness**



Deepening Relationships, Moving Beyond Homelessness

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



ON THE RISE



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welcome letter

A lot of the networks that I had built during my homelessness were null and void and I was no longer eligible [but] On The Rise continued to support me... It's nine years later and... the day I lose this gratitude is the day I'll lose my housing. And that will never happen. – Stephanie

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Dear Friends,

These are busy times at On The Rise's Safe Haven. Homelessness in Massachusetts has been going up. According to a report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in 2018 the number of people experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts exceeded 20,000 – the highest since 2013. The work you make possible here is more essential than ever.

With your generosity, and your investment in On The Rise's uniquely flexible, relational approach, the Safe Haven Program is going strong. In 2018, we connected with the women of our programs over 12,000 times – the most ever – where a “connection” can be anything from a brief phone call - to an 8-hour day at the Safe Haven using all the resources there – to an hours-long one-on-one session with a staff member for accompaniment and advocacy around pivotal life issues like housing, medical care, relationships, legal concerns, safety planning, financial matters, education and employment, and more. Relationships and trust grow through the accumulation of these many connections – and form the basis for our ongoing advocacy.

As the regional housing shortage continues to put intense pressure on those with the fewest resources, the housing-stabilization work of our Keep The Keys Program is vital for the women who move into housing. The Keep The Keys Capacity Building Campaign is behind us - fueled by you, our generous, supportive community. Now, this stronger, more robust program is more deeply engaged, with more housed women, than ever before – inspired by your determination to help women hold on to their hard-won housing, and by the resolve to stand by our program participants as they explore new possibilities for wellbeing that can only emerge when homelessness is behind them.

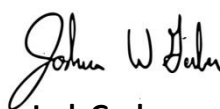
We can't look back on 2018 and our strong programs, without celebrating the service of long-time, beloved Board Chair Carol Goss. At the end of the year, Carol was elected Board Member Emerita after 13 years of Board service, and new Board Chair Josh Gerber took up the gavel. Now, On The Rise is moving into its next chapter with a major strategic planning effort envisioned in the coming year. We look forward to hearing from you, our caring, committed donors, as we map out our future, and as you continue to show up for the women in our programs – with your countless hours of volunteer service, home-cooked meals, clothing and toiletries, fulfilled wish-lists for women moving into housing, and so much more.

Thank you for all the ways you represent the values of On The Rise. In these divisive times, we are more grateful than ever, for your support. Let's continue to work together, for as long as it takes: staying engaged and connected across differences, sharing tangible and intangible resources, and creating the community we want for our neighbors and ourselves.

*The first time I walked in, I was fearful. I was full of fear... As I continued to come to On The Rise, I became very comfortable, and felt safe. I trusted the employees as I hadn't done before. That they were looking out for my best interests, which was something new to me.
– Stephanie*



Martha Sandler
Executive Director



Josh Gerber
Board Chair



Carol Goss
Board Member Emerita



year in review

In 2018, On The Rise advocates worked with 446 of the most vulnerable women; those with few alternatives, falling through the cracks of the social services system. In our Safe Haven Program, we provide immediate safety and build long-term, supportive relationships that help each woman direct her own path to wellbeing. When women do find housing, these relationships uniquely position our staff to assist women in our Keep The Keys Program through new challenges so they can stay housed.

204 home-cooked lunches provided



352 volunteers



1,032 loads of laundry done



35 women moved into housing



4,011 pounds of clothing & toiletries received



446 women served



how we do what we do

On The Rise, a day program for homeless and formerly-homeless women, creates a community where women have the relationships, safety and resources they need to move out of homelessness. On The Rise engages with those most in need, and supports their initiative and strength as they move beyond crisis and discover new possibilities.

building relationships

Our dedicated team of Advocates combines the insight that comes from personal experiences of homelessness, violence, and addiction with the clinical training of licensed social workers. On The Rise spends hundreds of hours accompanying women to hospitals, court, and the many social service and community settings where our knowledgeable support and advocacy help them address the challenges at the crux of their homelessness.

tangible life essentials

On The Rise helps women manage the day-to-day struggles of life when they do not have a stable and safe home to call their own. Dignity and choice are central to On The Rise's provision of tangible necessities. At On The Rise, women have access to tangible essentials for living such as: day-time shelter from the environment, breakfast and lunch, a private shower, clothing, access to phones, computer and internet access, a quiet space to nap and read, an address to send and receive mail, access to laundry, storage space for belongings and small cash allotments to address a specific need.

advocacy

Advocates provide support to women as they begin to address the issues that led to their homelessness and take steps towards their goals. Advocates draw on their relationship with each woman and their extensive knowledge of the resources in our community to facilitate her access and success. We often refer to our accompaniment and advocacy work as the “mortar-between-the-bricks” because we provide the practical, emotional, and professional support (the mortar) for women that improves their ability to successfully find, access, and participate in specialized programs (the bricks).

keep the keys

When the day finally comes for a woman to move into her own apartment, what should become of her relationship with On The Rise? Our goal is to continue to support each woman who needs us once she has moved into her own home. The challenges of being poor, or maintaining sobriety, or managing physical and mental health issues, do not go away once a woman has the keys to her apartment. These challenges often persist, and new challenges arise—feeling isolated, managing money, living independently, and making connections in a new community. The social support and early intervention provided by On The Rise has proven critical to helping women maintain their housing.



"I love all the female empowerment that On The Rise stands for. I want to thank the staff for all your wonderful examples of what strong women look like."

"If I didn't have On The Rise, I would have given up a long, long time ago"



I guess I feel like we are living in scary, sometimes dark times and often I feel helpless to do anything about it. But cooking a good meal for people who could use a good meal? That much I can do. – Community Cooks volunteer

"The women at On The Rise are part of the community I live in – getting to know them has expanded my sense of community and deepened my sense of belonging."

"This is the first step on a wonderful path of security and productivity, it's a blessing."



"On The Rise is unique in the true sense of the word: accepting each woman at her own place; helping her to grow at her pace; and realize her own strength."

Cooking for On The Rise is one of the stable highlights of my month. I love being able to do something well for my community. Especially for such a dedicated and helpful group! I walk by OTR regularly, and see the women who use the service. It is wonderful to help them in their transition. – Community Cooks volunteer

"My days at On The Rise are always peaceful. And I can always talk with someone when I have a problem."

Members of the Cambridge Insight Mediation Center are nearby neighbors to the women at On the Rise, as our buildings are located on the same block. This proximity to one another gives special meaning to the pleasure of sharing food and offering support to the residents and staff. The work of On the Rise reminds us, even as we simply pass by the building, what it means to be good neighbors, friends, and members of the shared Cambridge community. – Community Cooks volunteer

"I used to be ashamed about being homeless and wanted to stay anonymous. Thanks to On The Rise, I now have the strength to share my story and know that it does not define me. "



get involved

donate

On The Rise depends on more than 350 individuals, families, businesses, faith-based communities, schools and other groups who provide energy, time, talents and resources to create and maintain a caring environment for the women who come to On The Rise.

- Support our annual events: Prepare For Winter Dinner and Empty Bowls
- Celebrate a love one by making a gift in their honor or memory
- Mark a special occasion with a donation in lieu of gifts
- Support our women through month (sustainer's circle)/annual giving and corporate matching

in kind donations

- Travel sized and in season casual clothing are always in need. As the seasons change so do our needs so please visit our website for updated needs.

volunteer

- Join us for a service day on the first Saturday of each month. Cook and deliver a home-cooked meal. Support a newly housed women by fulfilling a Moving Home Drive of basic household items to fill her new home.

partner with us

- Host a tangible essentials drive with family, friends or colleagues or host an event to benefit On The Rise

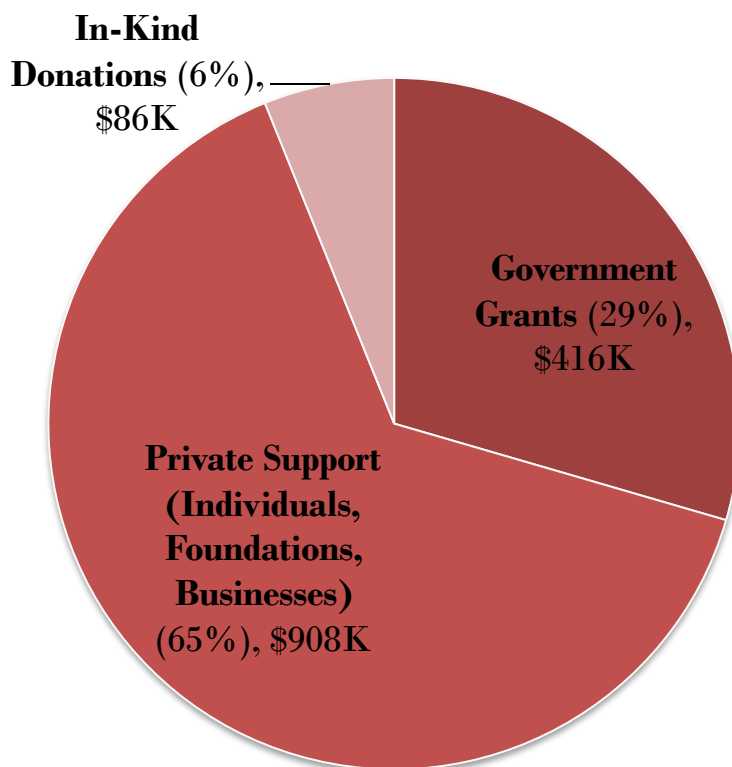
To learn more about getting involved with On The Rise, please email us at maddie.porter@ontherise.org.



financials

As demand for our programs has increased, our annual operating budget has grown to approximately \$1.4 million in 2018. We have successfully diversified our revenue sources to include government contracts, foundation grants, business partnerships, individual generosity, and a signature fundraising dinner. Maintaining diverse funding sources (especially the high percentage of individual donors) is relatively labor-intensive for a small organization, but provides an important level of stability that is crucial to our sustainability from year-to-year.

FY18 Revenue



For more revenue and expenses details, please visit our website ontherise.org to review 2018 Financial Statements.