

Investing In Futures

2023
ANNUAL REPORT



Inventing and Innovating ... for 70 Years

Saint Leonard's Ministries is a community of intentions, actions and results on the West Side of Chicago.

We start with a foundation of dignity, respect, listening and love. From this mindset flows the success we see every day when somebody learns a new skill, finds inner peace, gains employment, advances in school and rejoins their families and friends.

And we're not exactly quiet when someone succeeds. We celebrate it. Cherish it. That's because we understand the old saying that hurt people can hurt people – so we practice the new saying that cherished people can cherish people.

We don't just know how to do this work. We invented it.

It was 70 years ago that Saint Leonard's became the first organization in Illinois to provide post-incarceration housing and social support in the community and outside of a system setting. We remain the go-to re-entry program in the state.

When parole agents visit, they typically leave with a goal to send people here. The Illinois Prisoner Review Board wants people to live with us. Elected officials help spread the word about our holistic wraparound social services. Then there's word-of-mouth in the community, and prospective residents tell us:

"Somebody told me Saint Leonard's is the place to go."

That's what seven decades of serving people will do. That's what seven decades of innovating means.

Who was thinking about providing housing and social services in 1954? Fortunately, Rev. James Jones had the vision we continue today.

He understood that our residents experience mistrust and dehumanization. When we ask people to come here, live in a community and trust us – it's a pretty tall order. But it works.

We don't just know how to do this work. We invented it.

Crucial to our work is ensuring that we evolve to meet the needs of people and changing times. Imagine if you were removed from society in 1994 and returned in 2024. You wouldn't know much about the Internet and smartphones. So everybody receives a cellphone upon arrival.

The cumulative effect of our support model is recidivism rates that fall below the state average. You can find those on Page 10. Spoiler alert: None of the women living in Grace House returned to prison over a three-year period. **That's a statistic we're especially proud of this year as we celebrate the 30th anniversary.**

While it's a goal to prevent people from returning to the carceral system, it's not the only measure of success.

Each resident has his and her own set of goals, and we create an environment for them to act.

Think of it another way: We provide the outputs (housing and food, for example) to create the key to the outcomes (finding meaning in life, returning to family). The residents unlock skills and thoughts inside themselves that they never knew existed. This is especially apparent in our women's theater program that wrote, directed

for residents. The alumni who work here do so because they have the best set of skills and experiences to do the very hard work when people entrust us with their lives. The same goes for members of our Board of Directors who have the lived experience we need to make the best decisions for our campus.

We also prioritize health. Through a partnership with RUSH University College of Nursing, residents receive high-quality healthcare from Day One in a walk-in clinic on campus. Getting minds and bodies moving in the right direction is key to spark success via other programs – whether it's our cooking lessons, construction classes or the high school graduation program.

Moving forward, we need more investment. It's an investment that pays dividends when people are not returning to jails, courtrooms and prisons that require our tax dollars to operate. More about our upcoming investments in the future are on Pages 8-9.

For 70 years, we answered the call to serve. We're ready for 70 more.

And we thank you for walking this road with us.

With gratitude,
Zack Schrantz
Executive Director

and performed a play for Illinois First Lady MK Pritzker in 2023.

Working in the re-entry space is not without its challenges.

We don't talk about it enough, but people can't have hope when they have fear. Fortunately, 40 percent of our staff consists of former Saint Leonard's residents. Their relatability creates a sense of hope that breaks down fear of something new and unknown when transitioning from the carceral system to community. And this 40% figure does not represent a jobs-program



Becoming the Beacon

As we celebrate this 70th year, we highlight a few of the key players and moments that made our longevity possible.

It began in 1954 when Rev. James Jones served as chaplain at Cook County Jail, and he witnessed the post-carceral reality. People leaving jail usually lacked somewhere safe and stable to live. They also left with what they came with. If you arrived to jail without a jacket in the summer, you left without a jacket in the winter.



So the Episcopal priest let them live in his apartment. When he ran out of room, he found an abandoned house on Washington Boulevard. Then he found another house at 2105 W. Warren that could house 11 men. He bought it for \$23,000 but needed more money for rehab work.

Irene Parker Coffin – a Wilmette resident and member of Christ Church in Winnetka – answered the fundraising call, and \$34,000 in donations followed. The home expanded to accommodate twelve more residents.

Coffin donated blankets and clothes. She secured an additional \$1,900 to install a water main and \$4,000 for a heating system. Her fundraising total is the equivalent of \$400,000 in today's dollars.



With the vision and seed money in hand, Rev. Jones recruited Rev. Robert Taylor to build the infrastructure and run the day-to-day operations. Rev. Taylor eventually assumed the role of Executive Director, succeeding Rev. Jones.



Saint Leonard's continued to grow its campus and reach, and our longest-serving executive director, Bob Dougherty, opened Grace House for women in 1994. A 42-unit residence for men, St. Andrew's Court, followed in 1997.

Key to our wraparound-support success is the Michael Barlow Center, which opened in 2005 and is named in honor of a resident-turned-employee who passed away in 1996. In this building on Warren Boulevard, we operate programs for education, technology training, mental and physical healthcare, and job-placement services.

The Barlow Center also expanded our reach to serve more than on-campus residents. Program participants can reside in the community, and each receives a dedicated case manager to help ensure that goals are achieved. This is true holistic support.

Today, we are proud to be the beacon for returning citizens. And we have plans for more infrastructure upgrades, social services and most importantly – people.

BY THE NUMBERS

Saint Leonard's House

108

Male-Identified
Individuals Served

69%

Secured
Permanent Housing

Saint Andrew's Court

62

Male-Identified
Individuals Served

89%

Secured
Permanent Housing

Three Decades, Endless Opportunity

Thirty years ago, we knew we weren't fully serving the re-entry population in Chicago if we didn't have a stand-alone home for women.

Grace House opened in 1994 to provide a true home environment in a shared-living space.

When you walk inside, the lobby and front desk lead directly to communal living spaces and a library lounge. Bedrooms are upstairs.

It's a home for first chances, second chances, third chances. However many chances are needed.

"I'm one of those people who needed a million chances. I needed another chance, and they gave me that opportunity," says Colette Payne, a Saint Leonard's board member who lived at Grace House twice.



Today, Payne is an advocate for women in the carceral system, providing assessments to prisons across the country.

"It's important that those with lived experiences are part of the conversations. Oftentimes legislators, folks working in the field – who don't have that lived experience – would have conversations about us, without us. It's important to have people with lived experience as part of the conversation because we know what we need," Payne says.

Women at Grace House attracted the attention of Illinois First Lady MK Pritzker in 2023 when they wrote and produced "Coming Home," a theatrical production.

Latrice Johnson, a former Grace House resident who now serves as Resident Coordinator of Grace House, experienced an awakening when she engaged in the on-campus programs for theater and poetry.



"I didn't have any idea that I enjoyed theater. I found out that not only do I like to see it, but I can perform and be part of it. It's both scary and exciting," Johnson says. "I've done improv, and I've done table reading. Now I'm trying to write as well as perform my own stuff. I never thought I'd be doing that."

With the support of staff and peers, the residents unlock everything they need that they already possess.

Grace House provides the key.



BY THE NUMBERS

Grace House

36

Female-Identified
Individuals Served

74%

Secured
Permanent Housing

Building the Foundations for Success

For 70 years, we've been known as a housing provider. But we're really a foundation provider.

The residential living spaces that we provide to people also provide the foundation people need to secure employment, pursue education, receive mental and physical healthcare, treat substance-use issues and more.

These pages narrow our focus to securing a job. These efforts prove to be a challenging – and rewarding – journey experienced by Saint Leonard's Ministries residents and program participants. As we walk that road with them, our approach combines strategy and respect to so that every individual can find their future.

The following programs are some of our cornerstones of Michael Barlow Center experience.

Road to Success

Two-week course, meets every weekday from 9am-12:30pm

This job-readiness program teaches skills related to job-interview techniques, workplace behavior and how to cope before, during and after receiving an offer of employment. Participants leave with a resume and are ready to start applying for available positions, or they

can continue into other campus programming.

Upon completion, participants meet Sunday Davis, Director of Workforce Solutions, who presents a list of current job opportunities they may pursue.

Employment sectors have included hospitality, healthcare, logistics, sports/entertainment venues, transportation and more.

"I'm a teacher at heart. So to watch someone go from hopelessness all the way into searching for their 'what next' and actually reach for something greater, that is my biggest reward. I watch people disappear in my chair when I meet them. They say, 'What am I gonna do. I don't have skills. Who's gonna hire me? I have a background.' I just had a guy from the construction class, he was so low when I met him. Now he's up to earning almost \$30 an hour. He was so excited, bought a car, took his girlfriend to a steak dinner. So that makes you do it again another day. They want you to be proud of them, and we really are proud of them. Oftentimes when incarcerated, they've lost family or done so much to hurt relationships that they don't have anybody to cheer for them. When they come here, we become the cheering squad and the family."

Sunday Davis, Director of Workforce Solutions

Culinary Skills Class

10-week class, meets every weekday from 9am-1pm

Taught by a chef who is a two-time winner of televised competitions on the Food Network, this holistic culinary class is held in the commercial-style kitchen on campus. Students learn about food-handling safety, equipment safety, nutrition, cooking techniques for cuisine from around the world, use of ingredients and heating options, and how to make desserts that drop the cherry on top of any meal.

Graduates earn a ServSafe food handler's certificate, and they find job opportunities in hospitality, healthcare, sports/entertainment and other venues.

"The best part of this experience is when a participant comes through the training program and they land the job that can take care of themselves and their family."

"Everyone comes in, and we're going to combat some of the elements like high-blood pressure and diabetes. With a proper diet and nutritious food, you can jump over some of those hurdles. I love fried porkchops and gravy – but everything in moderation Good food resonates with the soul. It brings us back to childhood, simpler times."

Chef Golden Moore, Instructor

Construction Skills Class

14-week class, meets every weekday from 9am-2pm

In this program, participants tear down the equivalent of a studio apartment and build it back up. Key to the lessons is safety with tools and equipment. Students navigate the process to install plumbing, electricity, wood framing, cabinets, flooring and drywall. They also paint this mock home.

Graduates are equipped to read blueprints and earn an OSHA 10 Safety Certification. They find post-program employment with general contractors, housing developments and unions. Some venture out as independent contractors.

"It's great just to see the smiles and how happy everyone is at graduation, to have the family here and to help them develop a better skill for their life. It's a good environment. I teach the guys to work together. They all come from different backgrounds and neighborhoods so there's communication and understanding that the guys have to work together – and that's the best way to get it done. And get it done quickly and accurately; I stand firm on that."

Jonathan Wilson, Instructor

BY THE NUMBERS

Barlow Center

65%
of participants from
the greater Chicago
community

35%
Saint Leonard's
Ministries Participants

92
Road To Success
Graduates

\$17- Average wage for graduates
of the skills training program

23
Culinary Graduates

25
Construction
Graduates

24
High School
Completion
Certificates



A New Tomorrow

It's time to upgrade our community-style living via more individuality and privacy.

It's what Grace House and Saint Leonard's House residents need. It's what they deserve.

We are planning to create spaces that feature:

- 37 single bedrooms at Saint Leonard's House.
- 16 single bedrooms at Grace House.

It's the type of living that Saint Andrew's Court residents on our campus already enjoy, and we no longer want men to wait to move there to enjoy single rooms. It's past time for women to experience these benefits.

Other potential upgrades to both buildings include:

- Elevator and lift support for ADA access and easier mobility.
- New security systems, cameras and privacy fencing.
- Energy-efficient heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems.
- Preparing the buildings to receive solar energy.
- New kitchens and other improvements to social spaces.

We'll talk about this more in 2024!



Grace House

A Community of Impact

Our approach is one of listening. That's how we serve and improve.

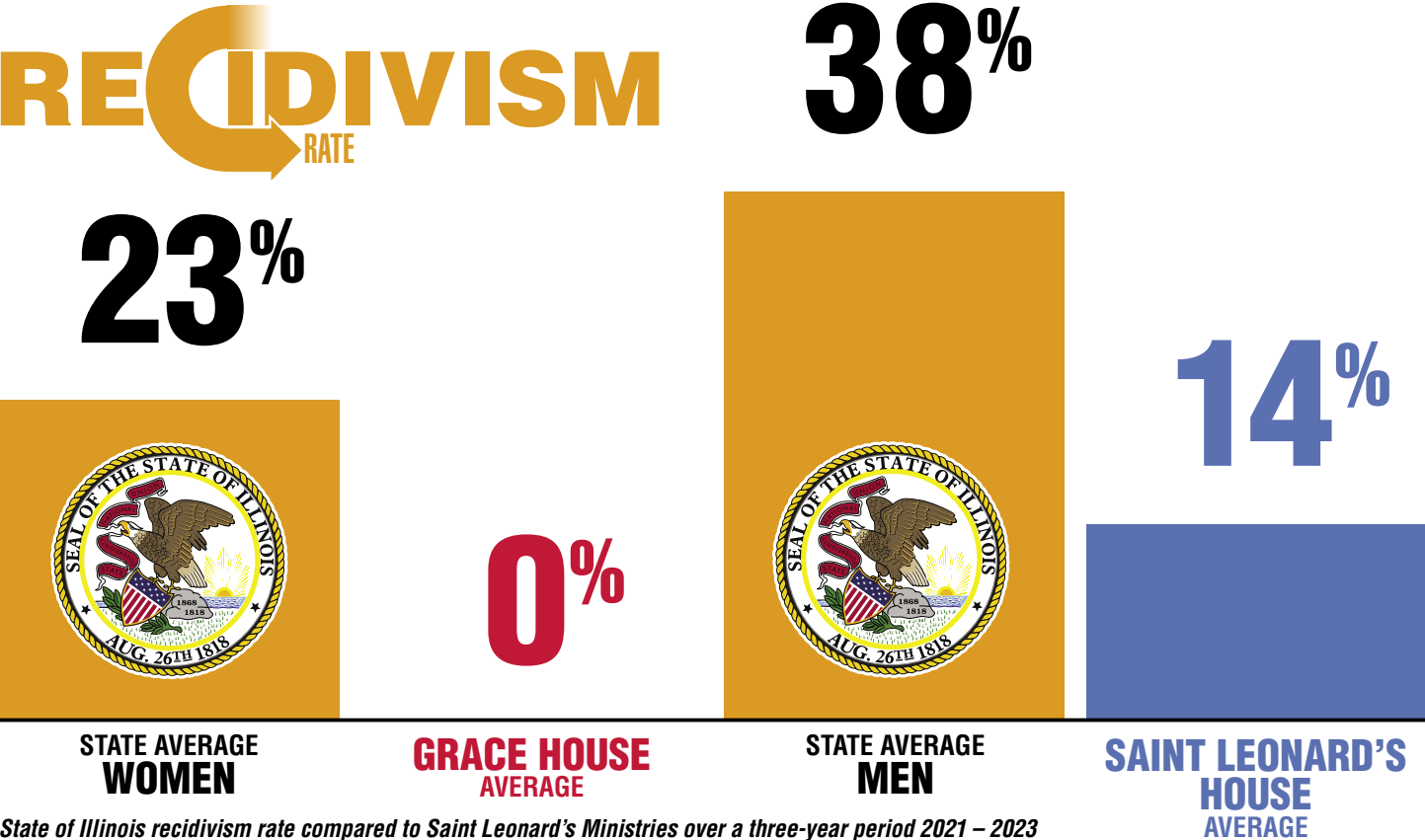
So we ask the residents what they think about their future.

100% of people who identify as women agree that "Grace House makes me hopeful for my future."

83% of people who identify as men agree that "Saint Leonard's House makes me hopeful for my future."

- We continue to strengthen our aftercare and follow-up with Saint Leonard's Ministries alumni – increasing residents' chances for success while staying connected to our Community.

- In 2024, we will strengthen our robust alumni association and network to reinforce the fact that we always have support in mind. We call it, "One Saint Leonard's for Life."
- And one of the best ways to experience this slogan and see these results is to attend a graduation ceremony for the Sister Jean Hughes Adult High School. We offer a 14-week program that provides a comprehensive senior-year equivalency – taught by college professors from across Chicago – to cover disciplines including liberal arts, writing, math, science and finance. This program offers more than an education – it is hope for the future.



State of Illinois recidivism rate compared to Saint Leonard's Ministries over a three-year period 2021 – 2023

Providing a holistic program – with mental health support, substance-use treatment, education and vocational-skills training – breaks the cycle of recidivism.

The key to open these opportunities is the incredible staff and partners.

At Saint Leonard's Ministries:

- Over 40% of staff are alumni who understand a resident's emotional and mental health needs.
- Comprehensive services and treatment plans take the whole person into account.
- Individuals work and progress at their own pace and are never charged for services.
- We say, "One Saint Leonard's for Life" which means alumni are welcome back any time for any reason.

We reduce the social stigma associated with incarceration, help residents hurdle the obstacles to success and walk with people every step of the way on their journey.

3

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More people are leaving the carceral system than ever, and our goal is to expand housing, education, healthcare and job training programs for those we serve. Please join us as we write the next chapter, honoring those who built what we have and supporting us as we forge a brighter future.

To learn more about our mission, capital projects, or to tour our campus, please phone our Development Officer at (312) 738-1414.



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