

OTTAUQUECHEE
HEALTH
FOUNDATION

Annual Report

FY2023

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A Message from the Board President

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While the floodwaters were still across her road during the July 10 floods, Hali Robinson, our new OHF executive director jumped into action. Her public health training kicked in as she and Beth Robinson, our grants coordinator began assessing the extent of damage and the needs. They purchased cases of bottled water and dehumidifiers; and OHF received household cleaning products to distribute. They made a request to the board to pay for several nights' stay at the Shire Inn for a resident who had been evacuated.

Hali understood the importance of responding swiftly to this emergency, and she understands the importance of mitigating the longer-term health risks posed by this event. This stems from the training and experience that Hali brings to this position and speaks to the public health perspectives and values she brings to the organization.

Looking ahead, Hali, Beth, and the board are exploring ways that OHF can utilize our resources not only to meet immediate individual needs, but also to address broader upstream community health issues. Our work with the Mountain View Supervisory Union on the Trauma Informed Schools Program is an example of this. Supported by a specific donation and OHF community grant funding, this program has provided tools and guidance for students, teachers, and staff in developing skills to manage the challenges of adolescence in today's social milieu.

With our historic preponderance of grants designated for dental work, we are very interested in exploring ways to support healthy oral hygiene in our communities as preventative measures. Could our community grants program help support mobile dental services that could provide screenings, cleanings and education?

Even farther upstream, OHF is exploring a possible expansion of our scholarship program by looking at models of tuition reimbursement for individuals entering health related fields of study. Given the current workforce shortages in many health care professions, finding ways to support individuals interested in entering these professions is critical to the overall health of our communities.

These are just some of the areas OHF is looking to make a greater impact on health concerns. We are not content to focus primarily on responding to immediate acute health needs. While this is a critical function of OHF as we saw during the floods, we believe it is equally important to direct our resources to the greater issues of access to preventative services and the infrastructure of health in our communities.

I thank Hali, Beth, the board, and our members for joining in this vision for OHF. We have an important legacy to carry forward and we look to the leadership of Hali and the Board, and the support of our members as we embark on these exciting goals.



Mark Boutwell

Mark Boutwell
Board President

A Message from... Executive Director

Hali Robinson

The timing of the annual meeting allows me to not only reflect on OHF's year in review, but also on my first year. We participated in the health fair at Woodstock Union High School, created a scavenger hunt to get kids outside, experienced major flooding and its impacts on our community, distributed free COVID-19 tests from Vermont Department of Health to the community, received a record number of grant requests (308!), and looked toward the future of OHF.

The transition into the non-profit world was a whirlwind. I was able to step in and lead the organization due to the incredibly detailed notes left by Tayo Kirchof. OHF is lucky to have a former ED who continues to dedicate her time and cares deeply about the organization. Beth also made the transition easy; her work does not stop when there is a change in leadership. She is a wealth of knowledge and a powerhouse of ideas. I also appreciate the support of my board and the various individuals (many other EDs in the community) who have provided support and guidance over this year.

Thank you to all of our donors! This year we received donations from 184 entities, totaling over \$294,000. OHF's successes are made possible by your support!

I took this year to focus on orienting myself to OHF and the operational aspects of a non-profit. I'm looking forward to forging additional connections and strengthening existing relationships with area organizations, as well as wearing my public health hat a bit more in the upcoming year.



Grants Coordinator

Beth Robinson

For the Ottauquechee Health Foundation 2023 brought a new ED and with her, new energy to OHF.

In 2023, I received a record number of grant requests followed by a record number of approvals. The July flooding brought us more requests and the opportunity to look at our communities differently. The focus shifted from the usual dental, eyeglass and hearing aid requests to things like fresh drinking water, housing for displaced folks and financial strains for folks usually gainfully employed who found themselves temporarily out of work

In true OHF fashion, we were able to react and respond quickly and efficiently. Our donors heard our cries for additional financial support and we found that our donations were generous. Our board members applauded our actions and responded favorably to set up a new plan for catastrophes that may occur in the future so we are in a better situation to help.

For me personally, in 2023 brought in an influx of new providers and supporters of OHF. OHF's bond and partnerships with the HUB, Sustainable Woodstock, Thompson Senior Center and the folks from the Plymouth Memory Tree to name a few, became stronger. The dedication to the communities we serve and the desire to collaborate with other organizations was astounding. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Folks felt listened to and cared for in a way they never thought possible. Because the needs were so varied and sometimes complicated, often several local non-profits were supporting community members simultaneously. And it worked.

I am grateful to work for an organization that supports my efforts as the Grants Coordinator. My passion is to help others. OHF allows me to use my resourcefulness and creativity to provide help to others in new and different ways. I find that when put to the test, OHF rises to the occasion because of the strength of our donors and our board.

I look to 2024 as an opportunity for overcoming more challenges, developing relationships and partnerships and serving those who need us most. Please reach out if you are interested in knowing more about OHF, donating or getting involved by becoming a member or board member.

The Ottauquechee Health Foundation strives to improve the health and well-being of people in need who live in the towns we serve.

We do this through financial assistance, community partnerships, education opportunities, and support of wellness initiatives.

Our Service Towns: Barnard, Bridgewater, Hartland, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Quechee, Reading, and Woodstock.

OHF Joins Forces with Nonprofits to Help Flood-impacted Neighborhood

Contributed by Gareth Henderson



When an emergency happens that impacts multiple people, it takes teamwork to help those in need. In the summer of 2023, the Ottauquechee Health Foundation was involved in just such an effort, after severe rain brought statewide flooding to Vermont.

For many, it wasn't clear where exactly the help was going to come from at first. Such was the case for Dalene, who is the treasurer of a small condominium association. The flooding damaged a well that served three houses – each with two units – and left homeowners suddenly without drinking water.

"It happened very quickly, and the water just rose so high that it flooded the well house," Dalene said.

She contacted local well expert George Spear, who examined it and noted the well was quite antiquated (built in 1947) and due to the damage, it needed to be rebuilt.

Green Mountain Plumbing was able to come and clean out the well. However, the next challenge was to get funding for replacing it, and three new wells were required – one for each house. In the meanwhile, the affected homeowners had only bottled water available, which was quite difficult.

Then, OHF came into the picture. After FEMA funding did not work out, Dalene reached out to the Ottauquechee Health Foundation to ask about resources to help with this need. But it turned out OHF was able to play a direct role – given the connection between a working water source and a community's health.

Beth Robinson, OHF's grants coordinator, encouraged Dalene to have the homeowners complete OHF grant applications and also applications for The HUB, a local group that provides emergency assistance for individuals and families.

Dalene said that while working with OHF, they made her feel like a neighbor and not just a number, and it was very reassuring. She said of her time working with Beth: "She's very good at making you feel like you can relax and it's going to be ok."

The major part of the funding for the well project came forward because Jenevra Wetmore, of Sustainable Woodstock, helped connect OHF with the regional nonprofit Upper Valley Strong. OHF applied for funding from UV Strong, which provided \$25,000 to help pay for the wells (as well as for a pump for a household impacted elsewhere). At the condominium association, this money helped four households cover their share of the well project.

"The organizations stepped up to the plate and combined resources to ensure that these households would not go without safe drinking water," Beth said. "We were able to work with Parker Water Works to commit to pay for the wells so that they could get to work drilling."

The partnership between OHF and The HUB was instrumental to the homeowners' ability to afford to have safe drinking water again." Dalene said she and the homeowners are thankful for the community support that led to this result.

"We're extremely grateful for the help...it's made a tremendous difference."

HELPED
28 people/households

COMMON ASKS
dehumidifier, cleaning supplies, and medical bills

AVG. HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$34,360.93



FLOOD DONATIONS
\$41,000

GRANTS APPROVED
\$43,000

SPECIAL THANKS
Upper Valley Strong
Susan Mordecai
Yellow House Organizing

Our deep gratitude to
Bill Chorske and Elaine
Gustafson for their
generous support.

Program Spotlight:

Windsor Central Wellness Initiative (WCWI)

WHAT IS WCWI?

Catalyst Cohort: Meets 5-8 times pers year and is tasked with becoming internal experts, influencing colleagues and meeting with their building administrators.

Leadership Cohort: Dave meets with Sherry and her leadership team every other month to focus on trauma-informed practices at a leadership level and systemic changes necessary to improve outcomes for students exposed to trauma.

Student Consultations: 5-10 student-based evaluations per year

In-Service Training: 2-3 provided each year

Student Evaluations: 4-6 intensive evaluations provided each year

\$25,315 in support was provided to the WCWI in 2023

WCWI is funded in part by The Donley Foundation

I want to share with you the impact of the financial support of Ottauquechee Health Foundation on our work to become a Trauma Informed District. Accessing the resources of the Northeast Family Institute and Dave Melnick has meant that we are able to provide our students, teachers and administration with the most comprehensive and current resources for those impacted by trauma. Our work with NFI prior to the pandemic positioned us well to address the immediate needs of our community. Since returning to a more typical school year, we are now able to address the fallout of two years without the routines, rituals and adult support children and families needed. The impact of COVID is seen in the presentation of our students, the exhaustion of our teachers, and the fatigue of our administration.

The most direct resource that NFI and the OHF grant has provided for students is access to comprehensive trauma informed evaluations. Over the last 3 years, we have been able to conduct 6 to 8 neuro developmental evaluations annually of students from Pre-K age through high school. These evaluations not only inform school teams with the best strategies and support for students who have experienced trauma, but engage families in deep discussions of how life experiences can change how students learn and interact with others. Beyond the initial evaluation, the NFI team is always available for further consultation if additional issues arise. This has been such a powerful resource.

Educators have also benefited from these OHF provided resources. Dave has trained many of our educators in Trauma Informed practices and meets monthly with our Catalyst Group who bring these strategies to their school teams. This group acts as a resource to their colleagues for specifically challenging situations and emotional support. They have also been advocates for change in schools and the district in regards to how we incorporate this work at all levels. Teachers continue to enroll in Dave's Level I and II classes. Initially, 10 to 15 teachers participated in his classes. In the last 3 years, from 3 to 5 each semester have used their course reimbursement benefit to take part in his classes.

Finally, Dave has worked directly with the Leadership Team to address the stress and strains of their positions. Principals and Directors of District programs meet with Dave every other month to discuss how the pandemic and their evolving roles create burden and burn out for school leaders. His conversations have elevated the symptoms of fatigue often presented with care providers and given specific strategies on how to address them as school leaders. I know that these 90-minute sessions have addressed the personal needs of my team in a manner that I could not. I too utilize Dave's guidance and consultation to remain available to my team.

I want the Ottauquechee Foundation to know how greatly I appreciate this financial gift and the tremendous impact it has made. Thank you.



Sherry Sousa
MVSU Superintendent

I have gained new language for how to communicate with students. I also have gained a new lens or perspective, which has transformed my teaching.

I have implemented many useful trauma informed strategies that work with all children. This course has allowed me to better my practices, eliminate many escalations and wasted time and help create a calmer classroom environment.

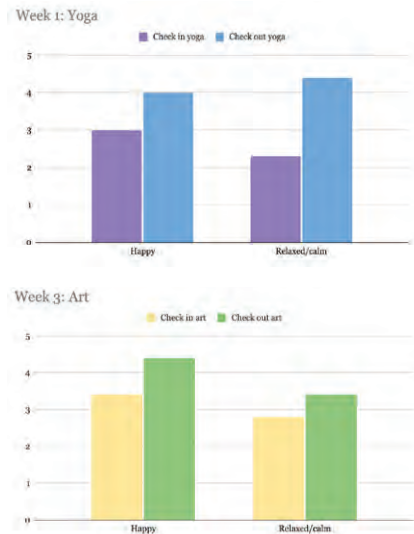
This course has given me a deeper insight on trauma and stress in children and adults. This insight has helped me identify children in stress and apply learning from the class to help them calm themselves and be more available for learning in the school environment! This was a great learning experience and applies directly to working with children!

OHF Community Granting

Making Mindful Connections

Contributed by Kelley Boymer and Claire Keith

Mindful Connections is a movement, mindfulness, and art program to provide mental, social-emotional and physical well-being to 15 Prosper Valley Students. This program consisted of 16 1-hour sessions over 8 weeks. The program was created and provided by Kelley Boymer and Claire Keith. Kelley taught at Woodstock Elementary School and has her 200-hour Yoga Certification. Claire is a certified Montessori teacher. Students were referred to the program by a teacher or a counselor or they could ask a teacher or counselor for a referral. One session a week was dedicated to yoga, mindfulness, and movement and the other session was dedicated to art. Students were given check-in and check-out questions prior to sessions to measure success, as seen in the graphs below. Noticeable improvements in happiness and calmness were noted (see graphs).



We had testing today and even after the testing I was still nervous because we have testing tomorrow again and this helped me calm down and get into the mindset of working and focusing and it was really helpful.

“ If I get annoyed I feel like I might start to take more deep breaths and take a second to think about what I’m going to say and maybe walk away and do something else.

I was really overwhelmed one morning because I thought I was going to be late so I took a few minutes and did one of the breathing exercises that we did and I sat in one of the poses that we did. I did that and it calmed me down.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Contributed by Amelia Donahey, Principal, Ottauquechee School

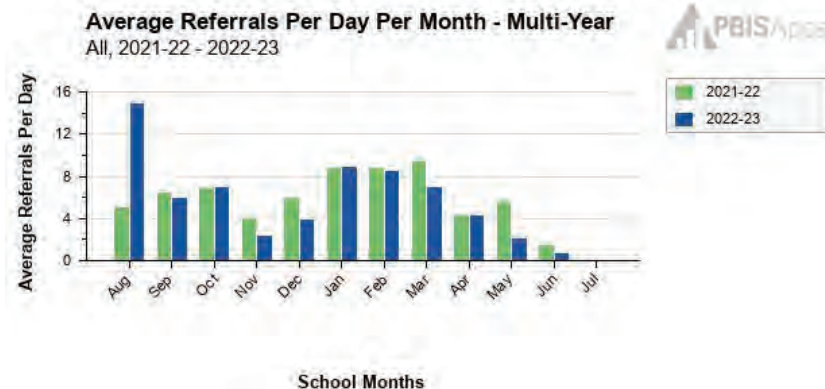
Dear OHF,

Over the course of the spring, your funding allowed us to serve about 25 students each day with nutritious snacks. These students all access free breakfast and lunch through our universal meals program, but they rely on us to provide a midday snack. Over the course of the spring, we rotated the selection. Some favorite items were granola bars, cheesy crackers, and squeezable fruit pouches. Having the additional funding also allowed us to meet the dietary needs of specific students.

Throughout the spring, we saw that these students were able to maintain alertness, positive mood, and social-emotional regulation. The months since implementation of this grant program coincide with a significant improvement in their wellbeing.

In addition, you can see that as a whole, our school population was more regulated and less likely to engage in problematic behaviors this spring as compared to last year. For the segment of our population that otherwise risks going hungry, regular access to food has been a significant protective factor.

Thank you for providing this funding to ensure secure food access for students, which in turn supports their mental health and social-emotional development.



OHF Community Granting - By The Numbers

Upper Valley Haven

216 Children’s toothbrushes
216 Travel sized children’s toothpastes
1728 Adult toothbrushes
1728 Travel sized children’s toothpastes

SOAK

(Student Opportunity for Achievement and Knowledge)
Supported 10 scholarships for low-income students in K-12.

25 Bike helmets

to MAHHC for UVM Protect Your Head at All Times

Scholarship Support

for a Woodstock student to attend the Health & Medicine Institute at Governor’s Institute of Vermont

5 Sensory Pathways

at Woodstock Elementary School, Killington, Reading, Barnard, and Prosper Valley School

44 helmets

to Barnard Academy for sledding, snowboarding, and skating



A student explores the Sensory Pathways at school.

Additional Community Grants

- Thompson Senior Center:** Author travel expenses for “Alzheimer’s Canyon” presentation
- The Ottauquechee School:** Midday snacks to address food insecurity (see article pg 6)
- The Nest:** Postpartum support group held at Artistree
- Mindful Connections:** Yoga and art for local middle school students (see article pg 6)
- Jess Kimball Wellness:** Home visit doula support for pre- and postnatal periods
- Second Growth:** Summer enrichment program for local middle school students
- Thompson Senior Center:** Support of Age Well Series programming
- Woodstock Rec Center:** Programming support post-flooding

Thanks to our dedicated partners and providers, \$269,082 in OHF grants enabled access to over \$304,560 in health and wellness services in 2023.

What We Do



Financial Assistance

OHF provides financial assistance on behalf of individuals who are unable to pay for the high costs of health and wellness services. Our **Good Neighbor Grants** support needs ranging from medical and dental care to medical equipment, hearing aids, mental health, and other health and wellness gaps.

For those who need a caregiver, our **Homecare Grants** are available to meet short-term needs. OHF also supplies financial assistance to area nonprofit organizations. **Community Grants** provide assistance to other organizations that support the health and wellness of our communities.

Scholarships are also available for students entering the health fields.

In 2023, OHF supplied \$269,082 in financial assistance through these programs.



Education & Initiatives

OHF continues to offer community education opportunities and initiatives.

Additionally, the Windsor Central Wellness Initiative (WCWI), currently implemented in the local school district, supplies **mental health support** to students, teachers, and administration. The 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment identified Mental Health service access as one of the major barriers to care. The WCWI helps to address this. In 2022, individual student evaluations were added to the program to ensure young people have the support they need to thrive.

OHF is also an active participant in multiple area committees, work groups, and task forces focused on improving the health of our communities through hands-on, proactive approaches.



Community Resources

OHF works in partnership with area health providers and organizations to provide care coordination and support.

In addition, local health providers discount their services, to allow our neighbors to access health and wellness services at a more affordable rate. In 2023, \$269,082 in approved grant requests enabled access to almost \$304,560 in health and wellness services.

OHF staff spent 40% of its time in 2023 helping community members gain access to the resources they need to be healthy by providing inter-agency referrals. This includes connecting them with Community Care Coordinators, community resources, the HUB, case workers and other external support systems and aid organizations.

OHF can help navigate beyond health needs.

Stewardship

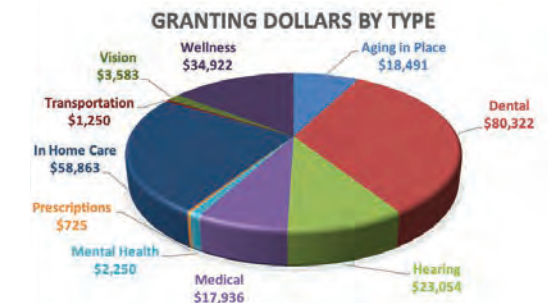
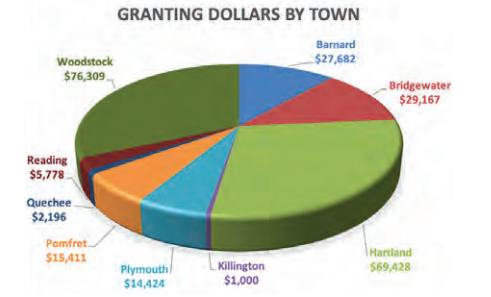
Good Neighbor Grants (GNGs), Homecare Grants & Community Grants

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Approved | \$212,000 | \$225,000 | \$269,082 |
| # of Grants | 223 | 261 | 254 |
| # People/Orgs Served | 153 | 136 | 147 |
| Average Grant \$ | \$950 | \$862 | \$865 |

Breakdown of 2023 Granting by Program

| | # of Grants | Amount |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| GNGs | 215 | \$182,534 |
| Homecare Grants | 25 | \$58,863 |
| Community Grants | 14 | \$27,685 |
| Totals | 254 | \$269,082 |

Preliminary Numbers for 2023. The 2022 990 is available for review on Guidestar



Financial Statement - Investments

| | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Investments | \$4,176,902 | \$4,477,989 | \$3,695,075 | \$4,063,851 |

OHF is proud to provide invaluable resources to those in need of financial assistance and support.

2023 Good Neighbor and Homecare Grants By the Numbers

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total People Served | Median Age | Median Household Income | Median Household Size | % Under 200% of Poverty Level |
| 147 | 66 | \$22,739 | 1 | 86% |

The BIG Value in Small Grants

OHF utilizes the Federal Poverty Guidelines to assess financial eligibility. Based on those guidelines, 100% of the Federal Poverty Level for a household of two is \$19,720, per year.

An average Good Neighbor Grant amount was \$865. Though not large, it is a substantial contribution to those struggling financially. Without these grants, important health services might not otherwise be available to those needing them the most. In 2023, 86% of OHF clients were living under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Partner Spotlights:

Plymouth Memory Tree

Plymouth has been a town that OHF has had difficulty supporting over the years. Not because the needs aren't there, they are. What was missing was a partnership that could advocate for their neighbors and friends and in return we could support grant funding for health and wellness needs. In 2023 the partnership was strengthened by necessity at first with the flood relief, but more importantly with the development of relationships within both organizations. Putting a face to a name with the PMT helped OHF to support Plymouth. We appreciate the strength of the partnership with PMT and look forward to working together to continue our commitment to help others in need.

Our Supporters

THANK YOU! We extend our deepest gratitude to all the donors and supporters who make our work possible. We apologize for any names or organizations that may have been inadvertently omitted and appreciate notice of corrections or errors. Supporters from January 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024.

We are proud to have 100% Board support!

A special thanks to our partners and providers for their discounted services and ongoing support.

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Covered Bridges Half Marathon
Donley Foundation

Glad Rags
King's Daughters and Sons
Laurance and Mary Rockefeller Fund
Ledyard National Bank
Mascoma Bank
McCullom Charitable Foundation
Network for Good/Birthday Fundraisers
Prosper Homemakers Club
Rimb Group
Saint James Episcopal Church
Spaulding Press
Upper Valley Strong
Vermont Community Foundation
VT Invitational Orthodontic Society
Woodstock Rotary
Yankee Bookshop
Yellow House Organizing

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Town of Bridgewater
Town of Hartland
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Town of Pomfret
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Shillen, Mackall & Seldon Law Offices
Sunset Valley Dental
The Village Butcher
Upper Valley Endodontics
Upper Valley Rehab, Inc
White River Family Eyecare

Wholistic Health Services (RSDC, PC)
Woodstock Dentistry
Woodstock Inn & Resort
Woodstock Sports

Acknowledgments

Tayo Kirchhof (Annual Report Support)
Meg Roylance (Sensory Pathways)
Kelley Boymer and Claire Keith (MC)
Sherry Sousa (WCWI)
Amelia Donahey (Food Insecurity)

Tributes

In Honor of Beth Robinson
In Honor of Dr. Steven Smith
In Honor of Kathy Calder-English
In Honor of Rhonda Lathrop
In Memory of Christopher Lloyd
In Memory of Jennifer Brock
In Memory of Marylou Ewasko

DID YOU KNOW...

OHF secured free COVID tests from the State of Vermont and gave out over 150 tests to our community in 2023!



OHF ROCKS!

OHF created a scavenger hunt for elementary school aged children so kids could go out and explore some of the outdoor spaces their community had to offer. Many of the rocks were placed near water – who knew flood would sweep through our area a couple of weeks after this initiative started!



Your donations change lives by supplying access to health and wellness funding and resources.



I wanted to thank you for all your help, especially my dental work. Due to my new found confidence I have been able to work more and not afraid to smile. Thanks so much! - 2023 Grant Recipient



**OTTAUQUECHEE
HEALTH
FOUNDATION**

Ottauquechee Health Foundation
30 Pleasant Street/P.O. Box 784
Woodstock, VT 05091

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Serving Barnard
Bridgewater
Hartland
Killington
Plymouth
Pomfret
Quechee
Reading
and Woodstock



2022-2027 Strategic Plan

Our Vision for the Future

OHF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan is the result of a multi-year process. The goals for this five-year plan are based on critical issues and strategies discussed during strategic planning sessions.

Strategic Goals:

Goal One: Build a solid infrastructure to support and maintain a highly functioning organization.

Goal Two: Ensure adequate financial resources for long-term sustainability and future growth.

Goal Three: Support, maintain, and/or expand effective programs and services.

Goal Four: Implement effective marketing and public relations strategies to increase awareness and outreach.

Evaluation and management go together with the implementation of the OHF Strategic Plan. Ongoing assessment is vital for several basic reasons: accountability, quality improvement, and predicting future needs and resources. Evaluation and management of the strategic plan will help to provide a clear understanding of the strengths and effectiveness of the organization's management and programmatic strategies and will help identify areas that need addressing. To learn more about OHF's five-year Strategic Plan or to help in its implementation, please reach out to OHF's Executive Director.



*Many thanks to OHF... We would not be getting through this health saga without you and the generous support.
Good Neighbors indeed! - 2023 Grant Recipient*