

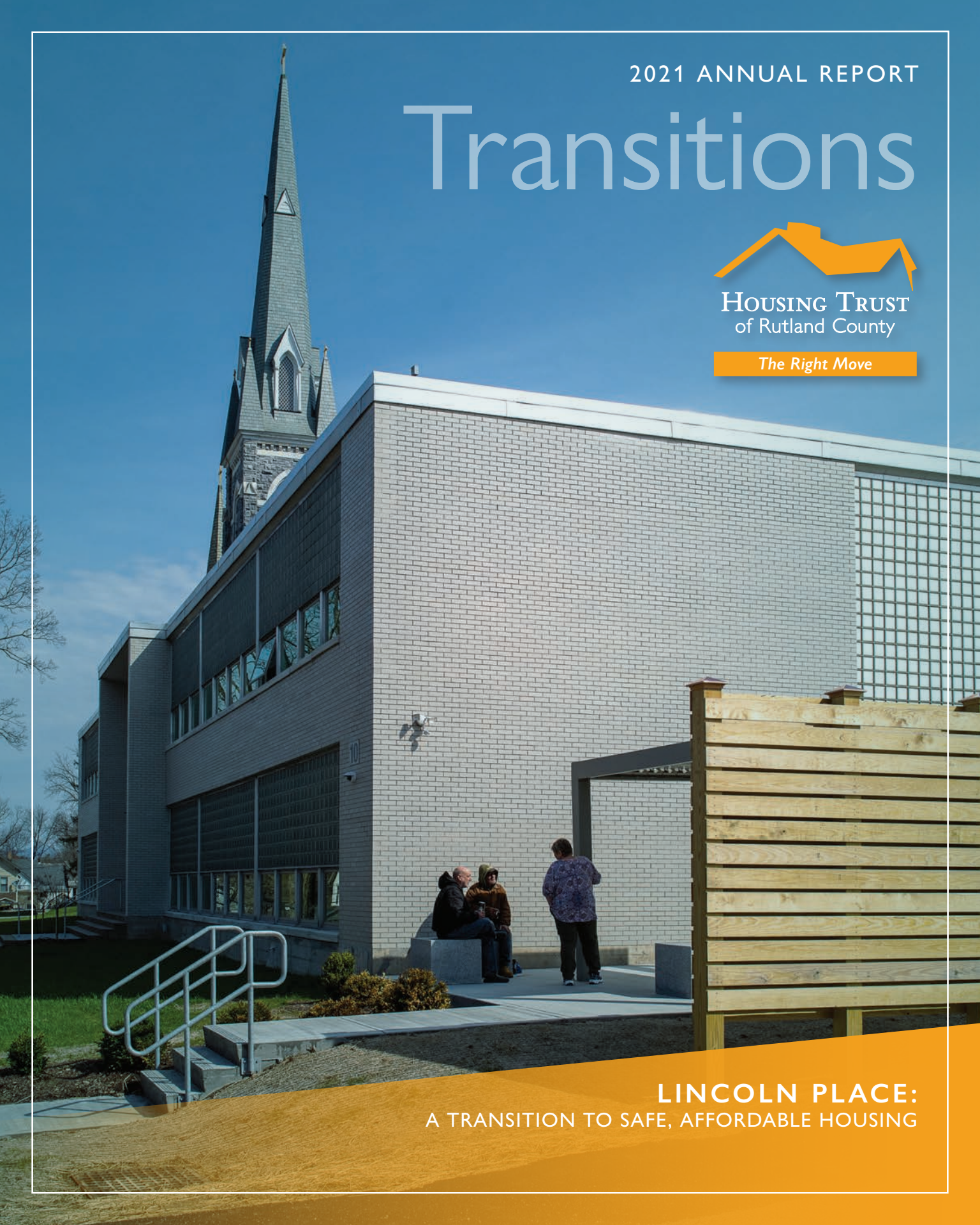
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# Transitions



HOUSING TRUST  
of Rutland County

*The Right Move*



**LINCOLN PLACE:**  
A TRANSITION TO SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

*“Transitions are almost always signs of growth, but they can bring feelings of loss. To get somewhere new, we may have to leave somewhere else behind.”*

— Fred Rogers  
(Mr. Rogers Neighborhood)



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*(Cover and above) Completed in 2021: LINCOLN PLACE* – located in Rutland, Vermont, the former Immaculate Heart of Mary School, is 19 one-bedroom and micro units for low income and formerly homeless residents of our community. The property offers several community spaces, onsite laundry, and services that residents may need in partnership with Community Care Network/RMHS, Homeless Prevention Center and Rutland Housing Authority.





Dear Friends:

We are constantly in a state of transition, some transitions are so small we barely notice them, and some are larger and affect us greatly. When in a time of transition, we often feel more vulnerable with many unknowns. Life transitions and moving can feel destabilizing, scary, and exciting all at the same time.

Over the past year the staff of HTRC has transitioned back to our offices and will soon transition to our new office space, allowing our current office space to transition into additional affordable housing in our community.

Together with our partners we transitioned the former Immaculate Heart of Mary School into 19 micro unit and one-bedroom apartments for low income and formerly homeless members of our community. This project provided a transition to safe, affordable housing for these individuals, giving them an opportunity to thrive, rather than just survive. Lincoln Place gives them a place to call home, a sense of community and the ability to receive services they may need through our partners Rutland Mental Health Service/CCN, Homeless Prevention Center and Rutland Housing Authority.

As we transition out of the height of the pandemic, HTRC understands that its impact is still being felt by our community, particularly lower income individuals and families. We will continue to service those most vulnerable in our community through housing opportunities and life-enhancing supportive services.

We understand that affordable housing is key to the health and well-being of both adults and children. We will continue work to create housing that is affordable and safe by transitioning unutilized and underutilized buildings into homes. We will continue to cultivate communities where our residents can thrive.

You will find our Spring Appeal included in this Annual Report. We need your help to continue our work and sincerely appreciate your past support, it is critical to our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary S. Cohen".

Mary Cohen  
Executive Director



## Lincoln Place Transitions Jeremy's Story

**Before coming to Lincoln Place, Jeremy, 42, had always lived with his Mom. An adult survivor of childhood trauma, he experienced a great deal of anxiety, depression and other mental health issues throughout his life, and spent 10 years seeking disability.**

**W**ith the encouragement of his therapist, Jeremy finally went back to work at a job he really liked. He decided it was time to take the next step and get his own apartment. He put in an application with the Rutland Housing Authority, and received a letter of acceptance to Lincoln Place.

**“Living with my Mom, there were always foster kids, and it was always loud. I just wanted peace and quiet. And now I’ve got it.”**

Jeremy says his move went very smoothly, thanks to the help and support of the Housing Trust staff and Lincoln Place partners. “Nikitta, Pam and Heather, they were all awesome. When I first moved in, they gave me a lot of things I didn’t have, like a broom and dustpan, a mop, and a roll of quarters to do laundry. They also showed me how to use the heat and the dimmers on the lights. One of my curtains didn’t extend, and the maintenance people fixed it right away. They really go out of their way to do things for residents.”


Jeremy enthusiastically cites a long list of things he likes about his new community, “The location; the staff; the central heat and air conditioning; the fact that they have meals brought in and they offer events. I like that everything is included – heat and electricity. And the water pressure is really good in the shower. Also, there’s

no smoking in the building, and I love that. My neighbors are quiet, helpful – and I’m only a five-minute walk from work.”

He is also appreciative of the supportive services that are available to residents. “Heather is a therapist, and has an office downstairs, right off the basketball court. If you’re having anxiety, or anything related to your mental health, she’s there to talk to.”

The one downfall, he says, is the close proximity to Jones’ Donuts and Five Guys. “That’s probably a plus for most people, but I’m on a diet. Fortunately, I have my own kitchen, and I’m learning how to cook. I can bake a chicken now, thanks to my Mom.”

**Jeremy shares his spacious one-bedroom apartment with his black cat, Jinx. He loves playing video games, and is happy that his apartment has enough space to comfortably set up his gaming computer. He is known among his neighbors as the “go-to” guy for computer questions. “Everybody knows my name.”**

Jeremy appreciates that Lincoln Place has given him an opportunity to live independently, and is grateful to the Housing Trust for their work building affordable housing. “I love it here. Now, if I could just get more friends and family to come.” 











## Lincoln Place Transitions Mike's Story

**Mike admits he hasn't always made good choices in life. Money troubles and a drug habit eventually led to life on the street for Mike – hard times he describes with a single word, “miserable.”**

**T**hen came the pandemic and the Emergency Housing program, and Mike found temporary shelter in a motel. Although he says it beat being on the street, there were still a lot of things that made life uncomfortable – people around him doing drugs, noise, a lack of resources. “It was not fun.”


When his caseworker at the Homeless Prevention Center told him about a new place being built, he thought he liked the sound of it. “I was a pest,” jokes Mike. “I always say the squeaky wheel is the one that gets the grease – I bugged them every day.”

**Mike's persistence paid off, and when Lincoln Place opened, Mike moved into his own studio apartment, complete with his own full kitchen. “I love to cook,” says Mike. “Once I saw the stove, I was happy. When you live in a motel, and have to survive using just a microwave and a mini-fridge – it's just so nice to have a kitchen.”**

Other benefits of living at Lincoln Place include the convenient location near shopping and downtown. Mike says the community is peaceful, and he enjoys visiting with his neighbors. For this lifelong Rutlander, life is good right now. “I'm very comfortable where I'm at. I don't need anything. I don't have to worry about a lot of things right

now. There are very good people here – they respect each other. And it's quiet – that's where I'm at right now.”

**“I feel lucky to be here,” he adds. “I've gone from homeless to here. I feel like I've finally found a home.”**

He has a suggestion for the staff looking at various ideas and activities that will help build community. “I think we need a pool table. You can always get someone to join you on a pool table.” 





## Lincoln Place Transitions Ann's Story

**Ann Cormia fell on hard times after her husband died in May of 2018. Within months she also experienced the loss of a brother and an uncle. Overwhelmed with grief and financial insecurity, Ann was unable to hold on to her Grove Street apartment. In 2019, Ann found herself living on the street.**

**W**hen the pandemic arrived, and brought forth emergency housing for those experiencing homelessness, Ann was able to secure a hotel room at the Roadway Inn, housed on one of the State's Emergency Housing Vouchers. Through her caseworker at the Homeless Prevention Center, Ann found out about Lincoln Place, and was encouraged to apply.

**"I'm really grateful to the Housing Trust of Rutland for taking me in," says Ann. "I have a studio apartment now, with a nice kitchen, and a living room with lavender curtains! And I love my bathroom – I love the shower. The water stays hot."**

Ann admits she wasn't sure she'd like living in an apartment building, but she quickly came to appreciate the amenities, including support staff available to help her and other residents of Lincoln Place. "Heather is an angel. She helps me a lot, and she helps a lot of people here. My breathing is not too healthy, and she helps me when I can't walk, like giving me rides to get groceries or to get my medicine. It's very comforting to know that someone is watching out for you."

**Ann appreciated the temporary shelter of the motel during Covid, but she says she is 100 times**

**happier in her new apartment. "When I was in the motel, I had to be careful with cooking and storing food," says Ann. "A lot of the time the refrigerator wasn't working, so I had to throw out a lot of food. Here I don't have to worry about that. The staff makes sure everything works right."**



Ann feels fortunate to be among the first residents at Lincoln Place. "I'm really grateful. The neighbors are nice, I like having people to talk to. There's good people here." Of the work that the Housing Trust does around affordable housing she says, "It's very important that they keep doing this. So many people can't afford a place to live."

Ann now spends her days enjoying the company of her Labradoodle puppy, Molly, her cat, Dora, and her boyfriend Kojack. She says she has more decorating to do, but she is happy to live day by day without worrying about a roof over her head. "It feels like home. I'm happy." 🐕







*Lincoln Place:*

# Addressing the Need for Perm

**T**he vision for Lincoln Place came into focus in 2020, right before Mary Cohen took the helm at the Housing Trust of Rutland County. It was to be a collaborative venture, designed to address chronic homelessness by providing low-barrier housing paired with on-site support and services. It would be the first of its kind in Rutland County, and it would address a great need in the community.

**Last fall, this vision became a reality as 19 new units of quality affordable housing came online at Lincoln Place. Developed and managed by the Housing Trust, the property operates under the permanent supportive housing model, with onsite case management services provided by Rutland Mental Health Services. The Homeless Prevention Center provides referrals and program input. Rutland Housing Authority subsidizes rent for income-eligible tenants.**

Mary Cohen: “Each organization has its role to play. We are able to do together what one organization couldn’t do on its own.”

As HTRC Executive Director since September of 2020, Cohen admits that joining the project in-progress called

for some creative problem-solving. “The vision was secured by the original partners, so really understanding where everybody came from was an important part of that transition, and then trying to execute that vision from the perspective of property managers. We had some lofty goals that had to coincide with what was possible operationally. That was probably the biggest challenge.”

One of those goals was to move people into housing as quickly as possible, which went against the traditional, lengthy HTRC application process and its 30-page stack of paperwork. “There were so many complex issues that arose as we tried to make this work. All four organizations worked closely together on what the application looked like – and how we could minimize the barriers. I think the real concerted effort and focus on that process paid off – we were able to trim it quite a bit, and as a result, people are arriving much quicker.”

**The adult-only facility is comprised of 7 one-bedroom, and 12 micro-units. 10 of those units house individuals or couples who have been experiencing homelessness. The remaining 9 units are designated for the general income-eligible population.**





# Permanent Supportive Housing



(Above) Mural artist, Lopi LaRoe – *Trailblazers* – graces the walls of the former school gymnasium within Lincoln Place. (Left) The grand opening ceremony celebrates the combined efforts of four local organizations to provide housing and services for former homeless residents. (Below) Renovations of the Immaculate Heart of Mary School resulted in 19 new housing units.



There were places in the state the group looked to for best practices, including a property in Brattleboro that was exclusively housing people who were experiencing homelessness. “We picked their brains, talked about what was going right, what wasn’t going right. And what we concluded was, making a property 100% for people experiencing homelessness was not going to work for us – we saw that in the hotels during the pandemic. Those folks typically have more needs than others. So we went with a different model – a mixed-income model.”



Heather Curavoo is Rutland Mental Health Services lead case manager embedded at Lincoln Place. Her position was made possible, says Cohen, through the resourcefulness of Laura Kass, RMHS Chief Services Officer. “Laura did some creative thinking and innovative funding to supply support for Lincoln Place. That agency typically operates around billable hours, and because Heather is open to anybody at any time, she had to find a way around that. She was able to find a source of funding, and a workaround, and it has proven to be a great solution.”

“Things are working beautifully there. With our property management team, with the presence of Heather, with the presence of the case managers from Homeless Prevention, there is truly a sense of community there.”


Lincoln Place was originally built in 1951 as a K-8 parochial school. The 18,000 square foot building operated until the mid-1970s, and most recently served the community as a privately run preschool until

2018. Renovations included all new interior layouts, accessibility modifications, energy efficient upgrades, and rooftop solar panels, which will help curb energy costs. The construction company handling the renovation was Neagley and Chase Construction out of Burlington. Laz Scangas was the architect.

“How amazing is it, that a 1950’s parochial elementary school could be transformed into modern-day, energy-efficient apartments,” says Cohen.

**But what made the building unique and historic, also presented certain challenges. As the recipient of historic tax credits, close attention had to be paid to preserving the exterior façade, as well as other historic features. Some of those features include a community room that still looks like a classroom, complete with chalkboards and cubbies intact; and the gymnasium with its small stage and adjacent kitchen, all still preserved. Rutland High School AP students created art for the public spaces. “It’s a nod to the fact that it was a school, nobody’s going to forget that.”**

Mary Cohen believes the Lincoln Place project has brought the partner organizations closer together. “We are enhancing our relationships, and building trust. We know we can rely on each other. So now, if Homeless Prevention puts forth a candidate, we know they have already been vetted, and we’ll need a really good reason to say no. In the past, we’ve probably said no more frequently, and we’re trying not to do that.”

**“I think everybody coming to the table, having an open mind and no preconceived notions – and certainly no hang-ups about past experiences that perhaps didn’t go so well. Everybody has a good say. It’s been so rewarding, across the board.”** 

(Above) Paintings created by Rutland High School student artists for Lincoln Place.

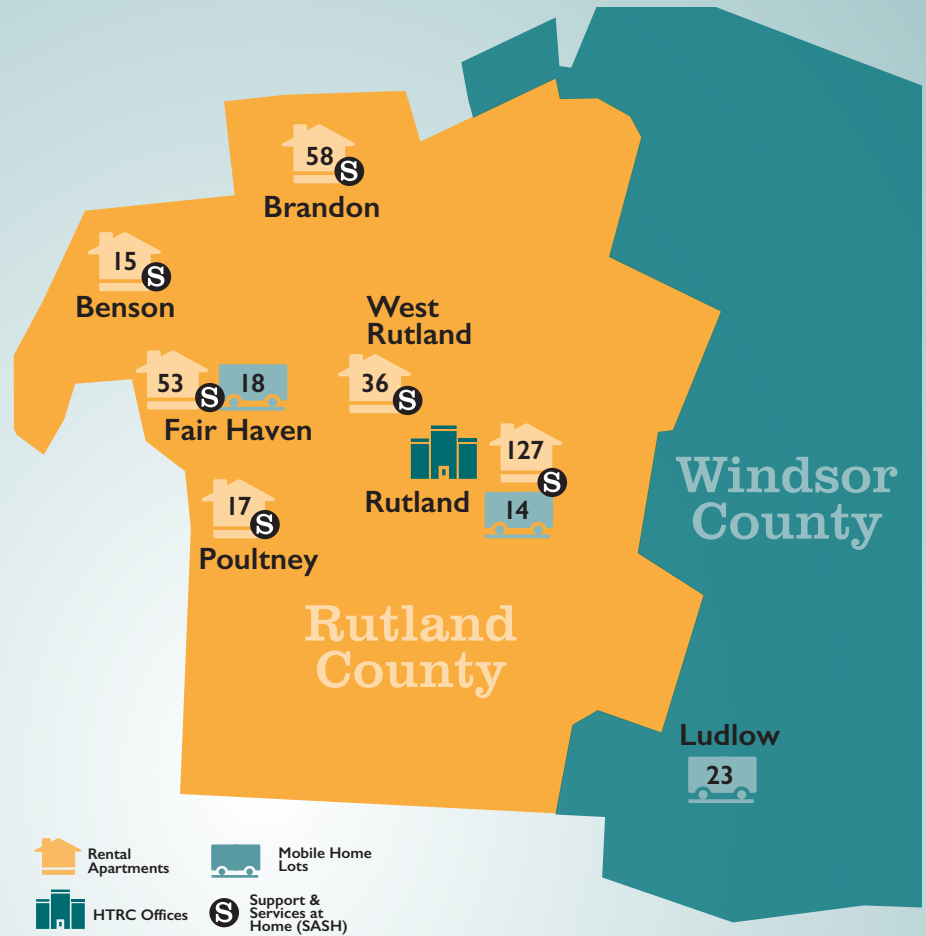


# AREAS WE SERVE



HOUSING TRUST  
of Rutland County

*The Right Move*



- Rental Apartments
- Mobile Home Lots
- HTRC Offices
- Support & Services at Home (SASH)

<h2>2021</h2> <p>AT A GLANCE</p>	<h1>98</h1> <p>Families received back-rent assistance due to the Covid crisis</p>	<h1>26%</h1> <p>of our current residents were experiencing homelessness prior to moving in with us</p>	<h1>74</h1> <p>Senior citizens supported in independent living through the SASH Program</p>
	<h1>385</h1> <p>Affordable apartments located throughout the county</p>	<h1>162</h1> <p>Children live in warm &amp; safe apartments</p>	<h1>137</h1> <p>Senior citizens live in accessible &amp; affordable apartments</p>

# Donors



**Thank you to all Housing Trust of Rutland County supporters for your generosity.** Your support and dedication to HTRC helps us provide safe, affordable housing to our residents and strengthen our local communities and neighborhoods. Our work would not be possible without you. Listed here are all those who contributed in 2021. If we have incorrectly listed or omitted you, please accept our apologies and help us to improve our accuracy by calling us, 802-775-3139.

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Allen & Sandra Gartner  
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Anonymous Donor  
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Sandpit

## MISSION

We transform buildings and land into quality housing and more, and develop relationships to cultivate communities that thrive.

## VISION

*Housing you can trust, afford, and call home – the foundation for vibrant communities.*

## VALUES

*Housing first: a place to call home  
Lead by example: be the positive change  
Respect, include, and listen: uphold dignity*



## IN MEMORIAM

This year's Annual Report is dedicated to **Strew Niklasson** who passed away on March 21, 2022 after a brief illness. Strew worked with Housing Trust of Rutland County as the Maintenance Supervisor. Strew joined the Housing Trust Family in September 2019, bringing with him, his strong work ethic, dedication, expertise and humor.

Strew leaves behind his beloved wife, Michelle and two children, Brenden and Cassidy, along with extended family and friends. He loved hunting with Cassidy, and sugaring with Brenden, along with camping, fishing and building. He would often share stories about his family with our residents and with us.

The team at Housing Trust of Rutland County has not only lost a co-worker, but also a friend. He has left us with many memories and stories to tell.



*“Grief is like the ocean; it comes in waves, ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.”*

**– Vicki Harrison**





## Meet Our Staff

### ADMINISTRATION

Mary Cohen – *Executive Director*  
 Erika Lamb – *Director of Finance*  
 Kevin Rooney – *Director of Asset and Property Management*

Leslie Gorman – *Staff Accountant*  
 Halie DelGiudice – *Project Coordinator*  
 Kathleen Dodge – *Compliance Administrator*  
 Danielle Hughes – *Housing Development Assistant*  
 Penny Inglee – *Marketing, Fundraising & Public Relations Coordinator*  
 Stormy May – *Staff Accountant*

### PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Nikitta Caveney – *Property Manager*  
 Pam Favreau – *Resident Relations Coordinator*  
 Kate O’Hagen – *Occupancy & Operations Coordinator*

### PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Eric Bradley – *Maintenance Technician*  
 Dawn Childs – *Maintenance Coordinator*  
 Neal Clark – *Maintenance Technician*  
 Tom Pitts – *Maintenance Technician*

### SASH (*Support and Services at Home*)

Lisa McCarthy

## And Our Board

Norm Lash – *President*  
 Bill Gross – *Vice President*  
 Scott Dikeman – *Treasurer*  
 Donnaleen Farwell – *Secretary*  
 Lynne Klamm – *Immediate Past President*  
 William Burke  
 Sarah Gordon

Bill Gross  
 Roger Louiselle  
 Sarah Miller  
 Candace Neary  
 Susan Oliviero  
 Cathy Reynolds  
 Dylan Watts

# Why supporting the Housing Trust is

## A MOVE TOWARD AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For over 25 years, the Housing Trust of Rutland County has been the preeminent provider of quality, affordable rental housing in Rutland County. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are investing in the continued development of affordable housing solutions right here in Rutland County.

## A MOVE TOWARD QUALITY OF LIFE

We give our residents the platform to experience greater quality of life through housing and respect. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are investing in our mission-based approach to property management, ensuring that this core value remains a primary focus.

## A MOVE TOWARD SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS

The Housing Trust creates high quality, attractive and safe rental housing, seeking sites and buildings that will make a strong positive difference in the community. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are providing critical funding necessary to revitalize and rehabilitate neighborhoods throughout the Rutland Region.

## A MOVE TOWARD RENEWAL AND REUSE OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Many of our properties are restored or redeveloped historic buildings. Old neighborhood schools, abandoned older homes, vacant lots and downtown buildings have all proven to make ideal new housing opportunities in Rutland County. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are investing in the historic preservation of some of Rutland County's most iconic buildings and architectural landmarks.

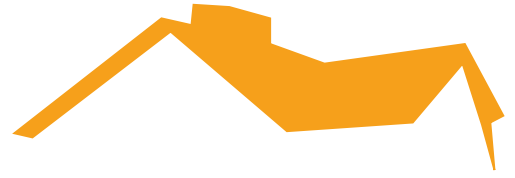


## A MOVE TOWARD PROUD COMMUNITIES

The Housing Trust has been recognized and lauded for promoting smart growth, innovative solutions, energy efficiency, renewable energy and strong communities. By supporting the Housing Trust, you help ensure that our progressive, innovative development continues to make our community proud.



# The Right Move.



## A MOVE TOWARD BETTER LIVES

We understand that life's most stressful circumstances often come with a need to find a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. By supporting the Housing Trust, you help ease the burden for those going through tough times.

## A MOVE TOWARD REHABILITATION

In 27 years, the Housing Trust has built or renovated 46 buildings and 3 mobile home parks, energizing neighborhoods throughout Rutland County. By supporting the Housing Trust, you provide necessary capital to continue ongoing revitalization efforts of the Rutland Region's most challenging properties and neighborhoods.



## A MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Through SASH, the Housing Trust of Rutland County gives many people the otherwise unreachable opportunity to live independently; specifically our community's senior and special needs populations. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are giving our most vulnerable citizens the opportunity to experience the highest quality of life in an independent living setting.

## A MOVE TOWARD MAKING DREAMS INTO REALITIES

The Housing Trust of Rutland County builds quality housing that is affordable, attractive, safe and decent; and it strives to provide service that is exceptional to its residents, neighbors and the greater community. By supporting the Housing Trust, you are not only funding projects, but also opening doors to new opportunities; turning the idea of "home" into reality for many individuals and families in our community.

**Every move  
with the  
Housing Trust  
is a move in the  
right direction.**





**HOUSING TRUST**  
of Rutland County

*The Right Move*

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(802) 775-3139

[housingrutland.org](http://housingrutland.org)

