

# Sarah's... an Oasis for Women

A ministry of the Sisters of St.  
Joseph of Carondelet



**2022 Year End Report**

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Sarah's Director**

## Reflections in Gratitude

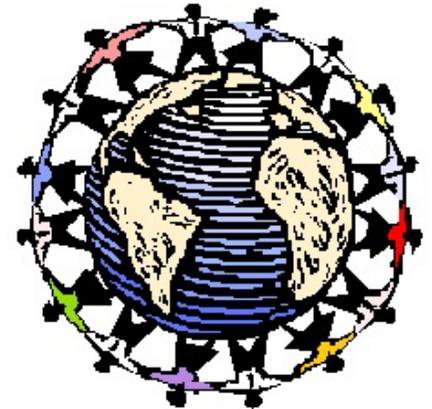
As the end of 2022 approaches, Sarah's reflects on all of the accomplishments and achievements made in the past year, and thanks staff, residents, and donors for the contributions of their time, talent, and resources.

Sarah's welcomed new residents, as well as said goodbye to others who moved on and found permanent secure housing. Many other women are making strides in their own and family cases for asylum after a long period of bureaucratic delays, while others still living at Sarah's are working with affordable housing programs and to buy their own homes.

Sarah's new Scholarship Fund was put into action this year. The fund was able to aid in the finances of books, tuition, and registration fees, enabling students to focus on their studies without the financial burden weighing on their minds. With the success of the fund this year, we hope to raise more funds for next year's scholarship to help even more residents in the pursuit of their education.

Among these personal victories, Sarah's is grateful for the ability to safely resume many of the community-based activities and events that were restricted for the pandemic. Sarah's has been grateful to regain some of our favorite avenues of connection and community.

While our residents are empowered in their progress towards establishing a sustainable life beyond Sarah's, these achievements wouldn't be possible without the support of our donors. As we look forward to the coming year, we begin to gather funds that make these accomplishments possible. If you're interested in donating to Sarah's, visit our [donation page](#).



*"May  
peace-  
making  
prevail on  
Earth  
today!"*

## How to Help

### [Sarah's Wishlist](#)

Make a difference by purchasing a specific item needed at Sarah's!

### [Donate a Labyrinth Paver](#)

Honor a Sarah's enthusiast with an inscribed paver, to be placed in the legacy labyrinth on-site.

### [Start a Birthday Fundraiser on Facebook](#)

Collect donations for Sarah's from your friends and family!

## Stories of Sarah's Victorious Women



Mariah Scheuermann

[Comfort's Compassion](#)



Alyssa Howells

[Finding a Home at Sarah's... an Oasis for Women](#)



Cheryl Behrent & Mariah Scheuermann

[Adag's Difficult Journey](#)



Cheryl Behrent & Mariah Scheuermann

[Soleil's Flight for Freedom](#)



Cheryl Behrent & Mariah Scheuermann

[Mother Madre](#)



Cheryl Behrent & Mariah Scheuermann

[Amare's Journey](#)

Find more stories on Sarah's YouTube channel:

[Sarah's YouTube Channel](#)



## Accomplishments of Note

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

**8** women moved into Sarah's and each started to connect to resources and support and found safety and community at Sarah's!

**8** women moved on from Sarah's and now have permanent housing:

- 2 families joined the woman from Sarah's who moved on into a private rental apartment
- 1 purchased her home and her family joined her from her home country
- 1 found a permanent roommate to share expenses and they moved into an apartment together
- 1 moved into subsidized senior housing
- 1 found an affordable apartment and now has her child with her
- 1 found a good job and an apartment
- 1 moved into housing with others to share the expense

**6** women are working on or completed working on their family cases for asylum and are near to their families being approved by their home countries to get travel documents to come to the US where permanent residence has already been approved and are working on finding family housing, support, and are being referred by Sarah's to agencies we work with for furniture and household items.

*"You are a good woman.  
You can do it!"*

**14** women are going to various types of school programs and **5** received scholarships Spring 2022 for tuition and books for Fall 2022, and **3** for Spring 2022 from Sarah's new scholarship fund which we hope to grow for the coming year.

**2** women will obtain affordable next-step housing through a new program from Sarah's in 2023 and are in the process of signing agreements to rent a room at Sarah's.

**3** purchased low-cost laptops through a program Sarah's refers to at PC's for People

**7** became participants in Sarah's new household gym / swim membership with the Jewish Community Center (JCC)

**2** in summer 2022 were selected from all those who applied from Sarah's and elsewhere for the Metropolitan Council Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 waiting list to obtain Section 8 vouchers to live in private rate housing with a voucher (which supports them in paying 30% of their income towards rent making it affordable).

All former residents and their families are welcome to stay in touch with Sarah's staff and residents to remain a part of the community as a "Sarah." Many do follow up when they have additional accomplishments and their [stories](#) are shared on our website and in Sarah's monthly "Victorious Women" eNews which you can subscribe to on our website to [connect](#). If they struggle, or as they bring their families to the US and have many new needs as a family instead of an individual, they stay in touch for additional support from Sarah's.

*"Sarah's will always be your home."*

## Occupancy

Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022, **8** women moved out and **8** women moved in during this time. After having women moving out but not taking anyone new March 2020-April 2021 due to COVID, we still have some open rooms. Of our 30 rooms, **5** are still open- just a different **5**! We are actively taking referrals from Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), International Institute of MN, Advocates for Human Rights, and SEWA-Asian Indian Family Wellness (AIFW) assuring that the support each new resident has will empower her to move on from Sarah's within the ideal length of stay – three years. The support and commitment of these agencies makes a difference in Sarah's being able to be a home and starting point for women to move on to new lives in the US.



*"One day at a time. One lesson at a time. One woman at a time."*

## Length of Stay

*"You come to Sarah's in order to leave."*

In the past year, of the **8** women who moved out the length of stay was on average **4** years and the remaining **24** residents the length of stay to date is on average **3.59** years.

All of the 8 new residents during this time had to be referred through one of Sarah's partner organizations to assure that they were eligible for services and support. Of the remaining residents, 5 came before those terms were affirmed in May 2021 and so did not have the support of a referral organization. Those without a referral organization's support have stayed for an average of over 6 years.

The difficulty without having referral organizations in these cases is that the ongoing support needs to be entirely provided at Sarah's and because these are immigrant situations that don't fit the criteria of one of the referral organizations. This means that their situations are harder to find resources or support for. They just aren't eligible. It is a lengthier process to find appropriate resources for individuals who do not have resources and support particularly for affordable housing and private rate affordable housing is scarce as well as assisted housing has lengthy waiting lists that are seldom open. Sarah's continues to connect each of these women, and all of the residents at Sarah's, with housing opportunities and have them apply for assisted housing when they are eligible and a waiting list opening comes up. Most are also working on a legal process such as citizenship or permanent residence ("green card") and/or have new and serious health issues they are treating. Both situations cause significant delays in addition to not having limited support of service organizations. Good news! All of these 5 have a plan for spring 2023 transition.

Besides the 4 whose families are close to being able to reunite with them, 4 others are working on the process of reunification with their spouses and children (in some cases also parents and siblings) through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the National Visa Processing Center (NVC), and the final step of interviews and approvals with the Consular Embassy in the family's country of origin. This is a lengthy process which has been further lengthened by additional backlog created during the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of support of family immigration by the U.S. government in 2017-2021. The average length of stay of the 8 mothers living at Sarah's and trying to reunify with their families is just over 5 years. Now that the barriers to family reunification seem to be reducing, hopefully this long of a stay is no longer going to be necessary and we will see stays closer to the ideal 3 years.

Sarah's staff support the connections between the families and the three agencies involved in approving and notifying them of steps in the process and if available, the attorneys that help at each stage. Follow up about the status with each agency and at times the Senator's office for support requires filling out forms and sending communications to check in. Each agency assigns a lengthy number so each family member ends up with a unique case number, alien registration number, and application receipt number. Most families have 4 or 5 family members they are trying to bring to the U.S. Once the family arrives, connecting children to schools, the family members to health insurance and services, financial support, and support in obtaining and maintaining rental housing or homeownership are continued support provided by Sarah's staff as well as connections staff makes to various service organizations with the family.

*Sarah's... an Oasis for Women* is a home dedicated to the safety and dignity of a diverse community of women who have survived violence, abuse, torture, war, discrimination, and trauma. The residents of Sarah's begin new and productive lives through programs that build self-esteem, self-sufficiency, confidence, determination, and community. Sarah's connects its residents to social services, education opportunities, job preparedness training, and necessary medical care. Women come to Sarah's through referrals from outside organizations.

Sarah's is a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ), St. Paul Province, and opened its doors in 1996. Sarah's is funded by the CSJs, the Sisters of St. Joseph Ministries Foundation, and many community collaborators.

