

# Nourishing *our* Neighbors

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



# Nourishing Our Neighbors, Today and Always

## Dear Friends,

The past two years for South County Outreach have been unlike anything we have seen before. In 2020, we learned how to turn on a dime to respond to a community in crisis. In 2021, we realized that as fallout from the pandemic lingered, remaining nimble and responsive was paramount to helping our neighbors in need. In our work, South County Outreach strives to help households maintain safe and healthy environments for themselves and their family members by helping them secure and retain housing, and keep their families fed with nutritious, high-quality foods. We also work tirelessly to strengthen our communities, enhance public health, and provide equitable access to hunger and homeless prevention. It is our belief that in **nourishing our neighbors**, we are providing more than just food and housing – we are safeguarding the dignity of our most vulnerable community members and nourishing their whole well-being.

Knowing that we cannot do this important work alone, South County Outreach understands the importance of collaboration and partnership. Our aim is to reach as many of Orange County's at-risk residents as possible, and the generosity of our numerous donors, from individuals, foundations, communities, and corporations, continues to ensure our clients that their neighbors are here to support them now more than ever. We are also involved with a number of collaborative organizations to increase our collective impact for those in need. South County Outreach works with the Family Solutions Collaborative – a coalition of the leading family service nonprofits in Orange County formed to streamline the process for connecting homeless families to the vital services they need. Additionally, we collaborate with seven cities as well as state programs, including the city of Santa Ana and the state of California's "Housing is Key" emergency rental assistance initiative, to provide critical financial relief to residents.

We also collaborate with other local safety-net organizations, local grocers, and food banks to ensure that our clients are able to keep food in their own pantries and refrigerators. Historically, South County Outreach received "rescued food" from grocery stores and retailers in addition to donated food from food drives, but the landscape of our food sourcing has

changed in recent years. Now, about 45% of our food is received via grocery rescue programs like our partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank. Another 45% comes from our community via individual food donations, partner nonprofits including Orange County Food Bank and Bracken's Kitchen, and local food drives, with the remaining portion of our food being purchased at wholesale/bulk pricing. All of the food purchased by South County Outreach with donor funding is fresh, nutrient-rich items like eggs, milk, and dairy products.

Our Upscale Resale thrift store continues to thrive by providing innovative ways to shop online via its eBay store, offering special sales and discounts to engage new shoppers. Upscale Resale well-exceeded its financial goals in 2021 and provided additional support to more programs and services for our clients.

This incredible work is only made possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of our volunteers, staff, and board of directors. Every day in our office, food market, and thrift store, volunteers are here and ready to be the welcoming faces to those we serve. Our staff team has doubled in size to include additional case workers and a full-time pantry coordinator to provide deeper client engagement. And the incredible leadership and guidance provided by the individuals on our board of directors ensures that key decisions for the organization continue to position us well for the future.

To that end, South County Outreach continues to innovate our processes in order to meet the ever-growing need in Orange County. While the past few years have brought challenges and changes that we have never seen before, South County Outreach remains steadfast in our commitment to creating a more equitable community, where no one goes to bed hungry or without a place to call home.

Sincerely,



*Cheryl Flohr*

**Cheryl Flohr**

Chair, Board of Directors



*LaVal Brewer*

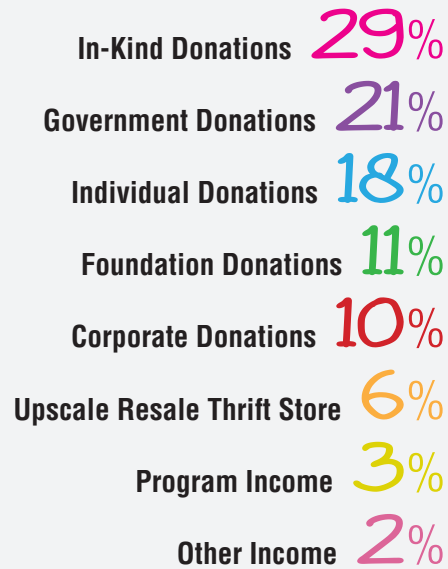
**LaVal Brewer**

President & CEO

# Financials

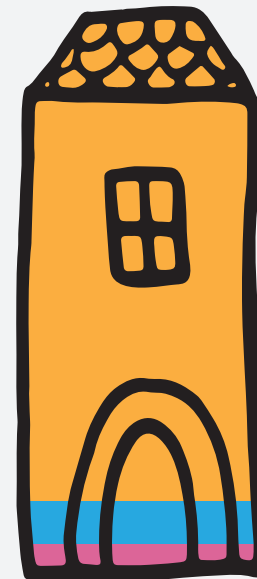
2022 Total Revenue

\$4.7  
Million



2022 Total Expenses

\$4.3  
Million



South County Outreach recognizes how revenue diversification mitigates the risk to any program or service we provide. Our healthy, balanced approach to funding and spending has been a hallmark of our financial stability. Building our investment fund through the establishment of reliable, flexible, and varied sources of support provides critical stability with every shift in the economy.

# 2021 Impact: Meeting the Growing Need in our Community



90%

of our clients were employed but still lacked the resources to support their households



56%

of our households are led by women



1/3<sup>rd</sup>

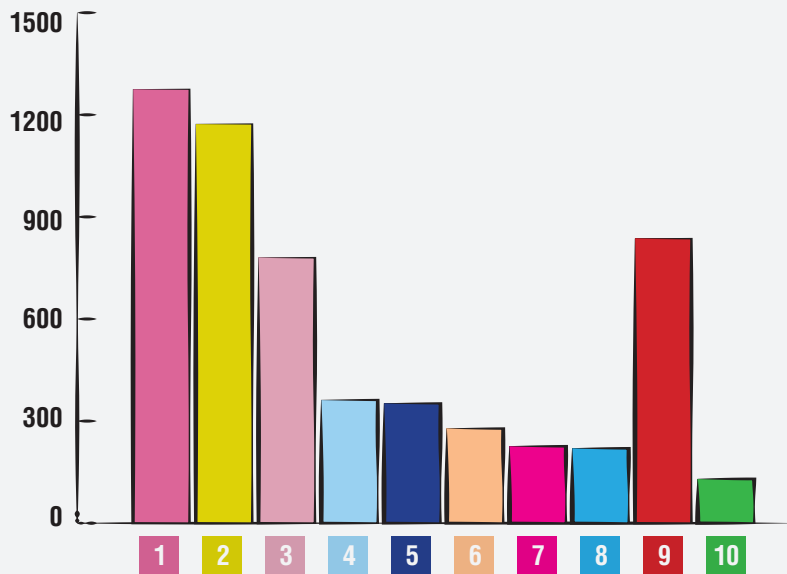
of our households were new clients who never needed services before the pandemic



2,000+ children

under the age of 18 were served

Clients by City



1 Lake Forest:  
1,275

2 Irvine:  
1,173

3 Mission Viejo:  
780

4 Laguna Hills:  
362

5 Santa Ana:  
352

6 Laguna Niguel:  
278

7 Aliso Viejo:  
226

8 Rancho Santa Margarita:  
220

9 Other Cities:  
836

10 Homeless:  
130

## Milestones

- Served **6,189** individuals, including homeless families, the underemployed, unemployed, seniors, veterans, and other vulnerable residents at risk of hunger and homelessness in Orange County.
- Provided **731** households with rental or utility assistance to avoid eviction or the disconnection of vital utility services – **400%** more households served than the prior year.
- Distributed **758,270** pounds of wholesome, high-quality food, which we sourced from grocery rescue, individuals, community organizations, local nonprofits, and corporate partners.



## Volunteers

- Volunteers in 2021: **1,741**
- Total volunteer hours worked in 2021: **31,245** – the equivalent of **15** full-time employees



## Our Community in Need

- OC residents applied for unemployment: **1,112,700**
- The average monthly asking rent in Orange County: **\$2,596**
- The annual income of a minimum wage worker in Orange County: **\$25,350**



## Partnerships

- Faith Community Food Donors: **39**
- Civic & Community Food Donors: **58**
- Grocery Rescue & Food Partners: **10**
- Collaborative Community Partners: **7**
- Government Partners: **19**
- Corporate & Foundation Financial Supporters: **46**
- Corporate Food Donors: **74**

## Housing Hope

**One thing we've learned over the years is that the people who come to our door for help are not JUST hungry or not JUST looking to pay rent – they may often need more support than they think. A great example of how South County Outreach's services have helped our clients in more ways than one is the success story of Lori.**

When Lori first came to South County Outreach three years ago, she was just looking for assistance in paying her utilities bills. As a single mother in between jobs and living with her two children, it was easier for her to just focus on one problem at a time. Her son had severe asthma that would worsen in the hot summer months without electricity to help regulate conditions at home, and Lori knew she needed to find some help quickly.

"I felt like I was just a number with other agencies," Lori says of her experience before finally connecting with South County Outreach. "It felt like home here, I did not feel judged and I was really struggling at the time," Lori recalls about meeting her caseworker. For Lori, the personal connection made it easy for her to get the help she was looking for. "I felt like my caseworker actually reached out to me...And anything I needed, he was there. He called me back and emailed me when I needed a response."

Thanks to Lori's caseworker, she was connected with other resources provided by South County Outreach, like our free food market. She loves the abundance of fresh food, and always left the market with more than enough food to feed her family of three. "I didn't feel so stressed out," she recalls.

Lori has been able to find support with South County Outreach over the past few years. She now has a part-time job. Her daughter is in college, and her son is about to graduate from high school (2022). "We really need South County Outreach," Lori says. "A lot of single mothers need help, without South County Outreach I don't know where we would be."

**"We really need South County Outreach. A lot of single mothers need it. Without them, I don't know where a lot of us would be."**

# The REAL COST TO LIVE IN Orange County

**Orange County is the sixth most populous county in the nation, with one of the highest cost-of-living. It is no surprise that 24% of Orange County residents live in poverty – and many more are food insecure.**

In the past year, the price for food staples like poultry, milk, and eggs has increased 14%. Before the pandemic, the average meal in Orange County cost about \$3.51, and now the cost is up to nearly \$4.

In 2021, rent in Orange County increased by an average of 16.7%. A minimum-wage worker needs to work 106 hours a week in order to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Orange County. Alternatively, they would need to make \$34.33/hour to keep that same apartment. Regardless of whether a person lives in poverty or resides in a food insecure household, the reality is many of our neighbors need a helping hand to make ends meet.

What does it take to stay in their homes?  
Watch this special message from our  
President and CEO to find out.

**\$2.1**

**Million in Financial  
Assistance Provided**

**700**

**Evictions Prevented**

**2,000**

**Individuals Avoided  
Eviction and Utility  
Disconnection**



**Scan To Watch Video >>**



# 2021 Officers, Board of Directors, & Staff

## Officers

**Cheryl Flohr** – Chairperson  
**Kerry Franich** – Past Chairperson  
**Brian Farrell** – Secretary  
**Brandon Stillman** – Treasurer

## Board of Directors

<b>Robert Eres</b>	<b>Ron North</b>
<b>John Mark Jennings</b>	<b>Elizabeth Pianalto</b>
<b>Tom Koutroulis</b>	<b>Susan Piazza</b>
<b>Greg McClure</b>	<b>Alicja Senel</b>
<b>Cathy Medeiros</b>	<b>Mike Thompson</b>
<b>Blaine Nelson</b>	<b>Ryan Reed</b>

## Staff

**LaVal Brewer** – President & Chief Executive Officer  
**Danny Boyas** – Homeless Prevention Manager  
**Manual Cervantes** – Pantry Operations Coordinator  
**Evan Colburn** – Food Program Manager  
**Nicki Cordero** – Director of Government Relations  
**Gwyn Fraley** – AmeriCorps VIP Member  
**Bunni Ickes** – Upscale Resale Manager  
**Tanner Lappano** – ERA Manager  
**Danny Lopez** – AmeriCorps VIP Member  
**Floridel Martinez** – Marketing & Communications Manager  
**Chelsea Mascareno** – Eligibility Worker  
**Teresa Mondello** – Upscale Resale Assistant Manager  
**Ivy Nguyen** – Eligibility Worker  
**Connie O’Hara** – Finance Manager (contractor)  
**Ruby Osorio** – Eligibility Worker  
**Cassie Owens** – Associate Director of Operations  
**Angela Reilly** – Data & Compliance Coordinator  
**Lauren Ruiz** – Director of Grants & Corporate Relations  
**Megan Ryan** – Eligibility Worker  
**Paige Smith** – Executive Assistant  
**Renee Stevenson** – Chief Operations Officer  
**Ken Stokes** – Upscale Resale Cashier  
**Dennis Williams** – Chief Advancement Officer

## Advisory Board of Directors

<b>Ken Bowen</b>	<b>Christina Parsons</b>
<b>Matt Conrad</b>	<b>Maryken Plaia</b>
<b>Frank Hathaway</b>	<b>Steve Severy</b>
<b>Dennis Kuhl</b>	<b>Mike Stuhley</b>
<b>Mike Learakos</b>	<b>Debbie Thrailkill</b>
<b>Lori Mazan</b>	<b>Bob VanEvery</b>
<b>Robert Ming (in memoriam)</b>	<b>Kathy Wilbur</b>

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**END HUNGER - HOUSE HOPE**

**(949) 380-8144**  
**SCO-OC.ORG**