

# We

**feed / house / support  
deliver / restore / train  
counsel / mentor / love  
We are Arm In Arm.**

# In One Year...

# 19,519

**Food pantry and mobile pantry visits**

# 1,602

**Home food deliveries made to homebound and disabled seniors**

# 350

**Evictions prevented**

# 137

**Security deposits paid**

# 117

**Utility shut-offs avoided**

# 96

**Received financial management assistance through Rep Payee services**

# 46

**Served to restore drivers' licenses through License to Succeed**

# 17

**Clients supported with job training services**

# 17

**Households served with long-term housing stability case management**

## From the Executive Director

In my nine years as Executive Director at Arm In Arm, I have witnessed the power of coming together in support of one another's wellbeing. And I have come to truly believe that we all benefit when everyone is thriving. At Arm In Arm, we are united in a common purpose to ensure healthy food, stable housing, and job opportunities for our neighbors in a time of need. The Impact Report 2018-2019 provides a moment to reflect on our shared effort in this mission as supporters, volunteers, staff, and clients of Arm In Arm.



As I take in the beautiful pictures and compelling stories on the pages that follow, I am filled with pride and gratitude for what we have accomplished together as well as hope and excitement for the future. May Arm In Arm's reach deepen and extend until all of us have healthy food on the table, a roof overhead, and most importantly, hope for a thriving future. As I transition from Executive Director to faithful supporter, I offer one final and heartfelt thank you for supporting Arm In Arm.

**Carolyn Biondi**

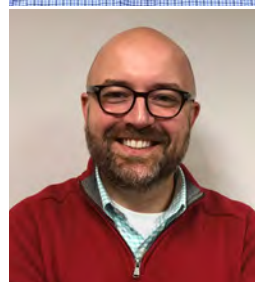
## A Message from Board Chairs, Past & Present

It is our privilege as the former and new Board Chairs of Arm In Arm to extend our deepest and most sincere gratitude for your partnership and support over the past year in working to meet the basic needs of our neighbors in Mercer County. The stories and photos that illuminate the following pages reflect what is possible when we join together as a caring community to serve others.

We would also like to thank Carolyn Biondi for her leadership and tireless dedication to Arm In Arm over the last nine years. During Carolyn's tenure, Arm In Arm rebounded from a devastating fire in 2011 to a period of unprecedented growth resulting in service levels nearly doubling organization-wide. As Carolyn transitions into the next phase of her professional life, she leaves Arm In Arm on solid footing to continue the work towards a future in which everyone thrives.

As you review this report, we invite you to take the time to reflect on the lives that Arm In Arm has touched and what your continued support means to so many in our community. We truly are better together.

**Ken Barbuscio & Nick Valvanis**





# Helping All Kids Thrive with Better School Attendance

Arm In Arm is committed to doing all we can to help our community thrive, and that includes our littlest neighbors. Last year, we embarked on an exciting 5-year project, funded through the Princeton Area Community Foundation, designed to alleviate and prevent chronic absenteeism at Robbins Elementary School in Trenton. The *All Kids Thrive* initiative establishes the link between good attendance and academic performance and gives Arm In Arm an opportunity to reach more families in need with services that positively impact their lives.



When children do not have the most basic needs of food and secure housing met, they are unable to reach their full potential. Our services offer resources to help alleviate these burdens and allow clients to focus on achieving stability in other areas of their lives. For children, this means greater success in school.

Our on-staff *All Kids Thrive* Navigator, Luis Rivera, has become an integral part of the Robbins School community, reaching out to parents of children who are chronically absent, raising awareness of the issue, and communicating with families on everyday matters impacting their stability. In our first benchmark year we served 39 students from 32 families across grades K–5. Parents met with Luis to discuss issues and concerns affecting their families and hurting their child’s school attendance. Luis assisted them with Arm In Arm resources and advocated for them with partner agencies who provide additional services.

*All Kids Thrive* enabled Luis to carve out a unique role that has proven mutually beneficial for Robbins Elementary School and Arm In Arm. By developing deep relationships with families, Luis filled critical gaps in Robbins’ resources. He established himself as a familiar face and advocate of the Robbins School community to whom families can turn in times of need. These new relationships allowed us to serve a new population and fulfill our strategic goal of expanding our reach. Clients who trusted Luis, and by extension Arm In Arm, were much more likely to utilize our free pantries, seek help with housing and utilities, and engage in our Workforce Development programming as a means to achieve long-term sustainability and prosperity.

We consider the trust developed between our Navigator and the school community to be a real achievement of which we are proud. Now in year two of the *All Kids Thrive* initiative, we have launched more in-depth outreach and case management as well as activities and programming intended to educate the school community about the benefits of better school attendance. Luis continues to provide the essential resource of a bilingual Navigator who lives and works in the families’ community.



**“All Kids Thrive is demonstrating to parents that we are here to support the entire family. We are working on chronic absenteeism, but in the process we are addressing the issues that families struggle with.”**

**Principal Zebbie Belton**  
Robbins School



# On the Move with Mobile Pantry Services

On two sunny afternoons in June, as parents arrived to collect their children from the Puerto Rican Community Center day care in downtown Trenton, Arm In Arm was there to greet 52 families with fresh produce, bags of shelf stable foods, and frozen chicken. With pre-packed bags made to order for each family, a Spanish-fluent staff member helped parents through the process and provided information on services we offer. We served neighbors whose low incomes cause them and their families to experience food insecurity and whose nutrition needs would otherwise go unmet, most of whom had never visited our food pantries before. And with that, our new mobile pantry was officially launched!



Each year, our Hunger Prevention program reaches neighbors in need with services providing healthy food for more than 10,000 people of all ages. Customers have an average annual household income of \$11,000, far short of what is needed for housing and other essential costs, let alone adequate food. We are an important resource in Mercer County and, in terms of both volume and nutrition goals, one of the area's busiest food pantry operations. Together, our three bricks and mortar pantries and home food delivery programs serve more than one quarter of those who experience food insecurity in Mercer County. But we knew we could do more.

Our exciting new mobile pantry initiative broadens the reach of our Hunger Prevention program by serving people where they work, play, and live their lives. To provide healthy meals for themselves and their families, clients find the resources they need by shopping in our food pantries, receiving home food delivery, or taking advantage of mobile pantry services. Cooking at home is less expensive than fast food or takeout options, and we provide enough food for our customers to prepare about 500,000 healthy, home-cooked meals per year. Each pantry visit includes three days' worth of food for every family member in a household, which translates into better nutrition and health outcomes for all.

Arm In Arm continually looks for innovative and creative ways to reach our community members. We are excited to venture out to other sites — schools, clinics, parks, churches, and more — and since that first visit to PRCC, we have continued strengthening our presence in the community during hours that suit the underserved through mobile events with senior residential building North 25, the Children's Home Society in Trenton, and CityLife Health. On the move with our mobile pantry service, we are truly on a roll!

**"The Mobile Pantry initiative impacts those who normally do not have access to or awareness of our existing services. It has been a great program in creating visibility for Arm In Arm and engaging our community where they are."**

**Shariq Marshall**  
Operations and Volunteer Coordinator



# When Michael was released from prison, he walked out into a world transformed...

“I went from one extreme to the other, from prison to the streets after 17 years and there was no transition,” Michael told us. “I got incarcerated during the period where nobody had cell phones. Nobody had email accounts. Literally the first time I did any of this stuff was the first time I came home in 2017. Just that right there presented overwhelming processes because all of this was new to me.”

Michael was dropped off at the Rescue Mission with \$150 in his pocket. Between a probation-mandated day program, his mother entering hospice care, and a 4 pm curfew, Michael had difficulty finding time to locate and secure the help he needed to get back on his feet. That was when he found Arm In Arm.

A few weeks after entering our License to Succeed program, Michael was able to receive the financial and administrative assistance he needed to earn his Commercial Driver’s License. In September 2018, Michael began a position driving trucks. With a stable income established, Michael applied for security deposit assistance through our housing program and soon moved into his first apartment in 18 years.

Today, he is thriving in his job, and his home has become a hub for his young adult daughter. According to Michael, “I’ll come home and her and her girlfriends will be there. I love it. It’s a joy after being away for so long, and praying, and hoping for a day when I could have something like this not restored but established in the first place.”

We see Michael’s story often—individuals doing the best they can to find stability for themselves and their families. Michael was not unlike his fellow License to Succeed participants who restored their drivers’ licenses nor the more than 600 clients who received housing assistance in 2018. By helping people like Michael reach their goals, Arm In Arm impacts individual lives and betters our community as a whole.

“What Arm In Arm did was remove the burden off of me that had me ready to relapse into some old behaviors. It may seem like a small thing, but look at the impact socially that it has not only on the person but on their family and their community at large. Now the police, my neighbors, whoever, they don’t have to worry about me out there committing felonies. My employers rely on me. My family says I’m doing a great job. So I’m grateful you guys existed.”

**“What Arm In Arm did was remove the burden off of me that had me ready to relapse into some old behaviors. It may seem like a small thing, but look at the impact socially that it has not only on the person but on their family and their community at large.”**

**Michael Nelson**



# Arm In Arm working together with the Next Generation

When our Next Generation Leadership Council (NextGen) formed in August 2018, we were hopeful this group of talented young leaders would bring fresh energy and ideas to our work. With a year now under their belts, the Council has proven the next generation are more than up-and-coming professionals; they are thought leaders and change-makers.

Members of NextGen, all professionals in their 30s or younger, focused their efforts on a range of special projects, including the launch of both our ONE DAY Corporate Volunteer program and our Mobile Pantry. In between Council meetings, they volunteered at food drives and in our pantries, represented Arm In Arm at local events, and supported our annual Spring Benefit.



## BlackRock Food Drive

**Timeframe: 3 weeks**

**Food donated: 7,565 lbs.**

**Contributed: \$14,174.50**

Perhaps most emblematic of the group's contributions was their BlackRock food drive. As Chris Bendel, a member of NextGen's BlackRock contingent described it, "We turned the food drive into a friendly competition by placing our colleagues on teams, which energized the entire office to get involved with Arm In Arm's mission. AIA staff helped us with a 'shopping list' and a points system based on the items most-in-need by shoppers at the food pantry. The extra incentive worked—the winning team scored over 2,000 points and received a "fast pass" to jump the lines at the company's annual Food Truck Day."

The new approach had a dramatic result. Despite having no history of running a major food drive, BlackRock's Princeton office produced one of our most successful drives of the year. And the effort is not stopping there. "The food drive lasted three weeks, but turning that awareness into ongoing engagement—things like volunteering at the pantries—might be even more important for the partnership between BlackRock and Arm In Arm," said Bendel. Going forward, this NextGen initiative is impacting the model for how we leverage corporate partnerships and young philanthropists.

As NextGen moves into its second year, there are signs that it will continue playing a major role in Arm In Arm's future success. Adrian Colarusso, another founding member of the Council, recently joined our Board of Directors. Asked why he thinks NextGen is making an impact, Colarusso said, "The NextGen Council taps into the energy and creativity of millennials. This group of diverse, talented, and compassionate professionals brings fresh perspectives to the table to help Arm In Arm better fulfill its mission to help our neighbors in need."

**"Working with NextGen has been such an enjoyable experience for me, and is another great example of Arm In Arm's dedication to finding new ways to partner with our community to better serve neighbors in need."**

**Elizabeth Koehler**  
Board Liaison to  
NextGen Council

## Arm In Arm / Our Mission



### Food

Ensuring food security with three food pantries, home food delivery, and mobile pantry services, we offer clients three days' worth of food for every member of their household with each visit. Each year, more than 4,500 households comprising 10,000 Mercer County residents make some 21,000 visits to our food pantries, receiving more than 210 tons of food, including staples like rice, cereal, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables, and fresh produce and meats. Our own garden adjacent to our downtown location yields up to 900 pounds of fresh produce every year, which is distributed in our pantries.



### Housing

Preventing homelessness and promoting stable housing for low-income families throughout Mercer County, our services support as many as 600 households a year with emergency financial aid to prevent eviction, foreclosure or shut-off of utilities or to restore housing after an episode of homelessness. We also offer case management support, including a temporary rent subsidy and connection to needed community resources, for as many as 30 households striving for long-term housing stability. Representative Payee services are also available, offering financial management assistance to individuals who need support in managing their personal financial affairs.

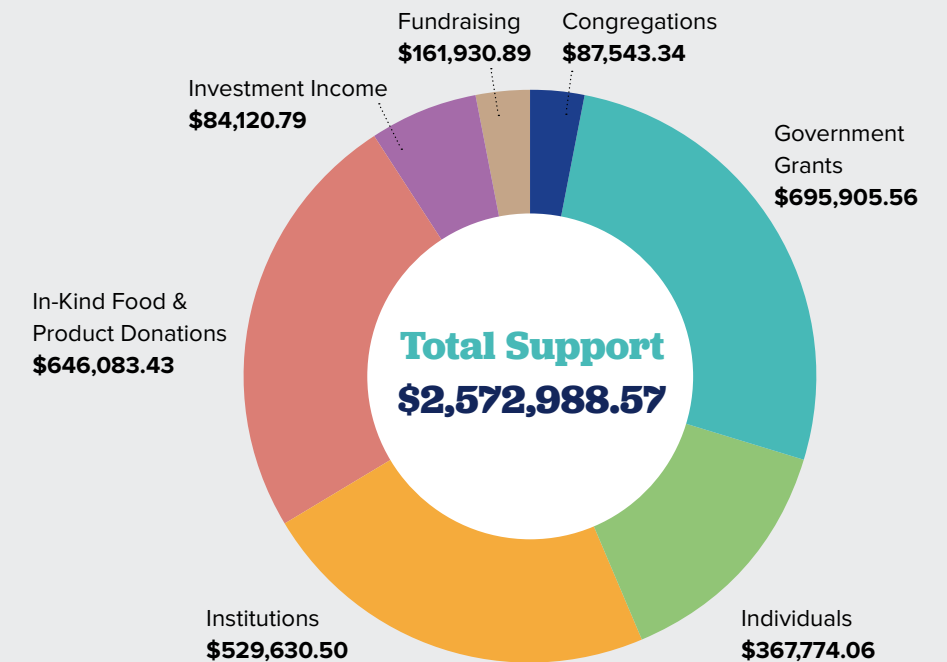


### Job Support

We offer training in our food pantries for customer service in a retail environment, as well as safe food handling and inventory management to some 20 adults each year. Our case manager assists the participants with job search, résumé and interview preparation and support to remove any barriers to employment, such as child-care and transportation. We are one of only several agencies in Mercer County, NJ to offer driver's license restoration services through our License to Succeed program in which more than 40 adults each year receive the financial and administrative assistance they need to restore driving privileges and secure a license, greatly increasing the likelihood of obtaining and maintaining employment and thus financial stability.

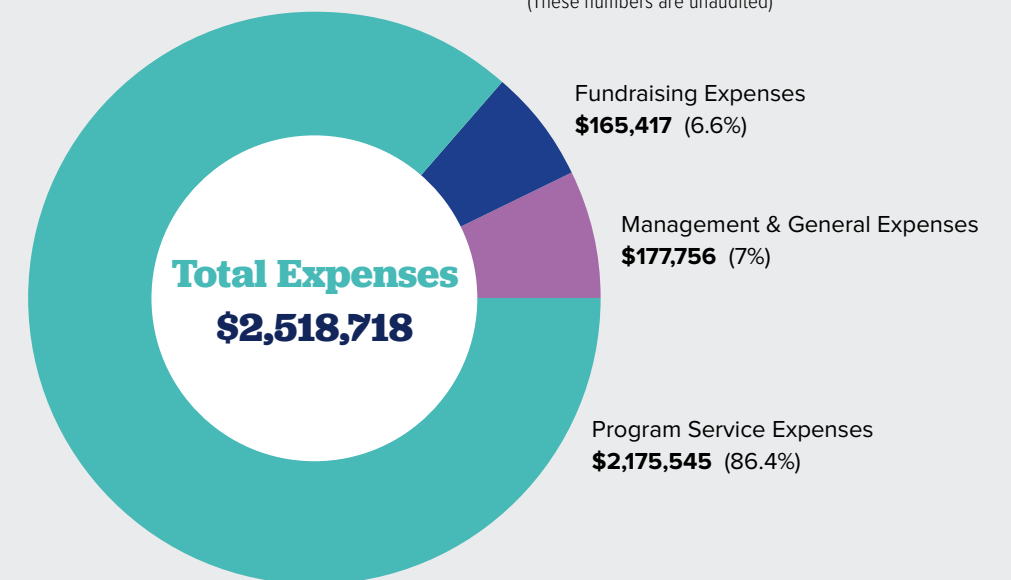
## Sources of Our Support / July 2018–June 2019

(These numbers are unaudited)



## Expenses

(These numbers are unaudited)





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America’s Grow-A-Row  
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Yes We CAN! Food Drives  
Yoga Sangeeta  
Your Part-Time Controller  
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Abiding Presence Lutheran Church  
All Saints’ Church  
Christ Congregation  
First Baptist Church of Princeton  
First Baptist Church of Trenton  
First Presbyterian Church of Dutch Neck  
First Presbyterian Church of Ewing  
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St. Paul’s Roman Catholic Church  
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