





150 years strengthening
New England communities

2021 Annual Report









Ascentria Care Alliance Services

Children and Family Services

- Intensive Foster Care
- Young Parent Living Program
- Therapeutic Family Connections
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minors

Good News Garage Immigration Legal Assistance In-Home Care Language Bank Mental Health and Disability Services Services for New Americans Services for Older Adults

- Laurel Ridge Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center
- Luther Ridge
- Lutheran Home of Southbury
- Lutheran Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center
- Presentation Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center
- Quaboag Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center









OUR EMPLOYEES DESERVE TO THRIVE

This pandemic has laid bare the degree to which we rely on each other to make it. We are all dependent on each other and we need everyone to thrive in order for society to thrive. It has also become clear that there are massive disparities and inequity – especially when it comes to those who are doing the most critical work of caring for others. This work has always been important, but especially so in times like

And yet we as a society don't seem to value this work - or the people who do it - at the level they deserve. They are working tirelessly to improve the lives of others, but are often left rewarded for that with low pay and the need to work multiple jobs just to get by. This doesn't seem right or fair.

We have come to the conclusion that our mission to strengthen communities by empowering people to respond to life's challenges as well as our vision of thriving communities where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of background or disadvantage must apply not only to our clients but to our staff.

The majority of our employees are in direct care roles in programs like In-Home Care and Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities attending to the needs of clients. Without healthy, supported and thriving staff, we cannot effectively serve our clients. The harsh reality is that government funding for the social services sector does not allow for adequate employee supports. Base funding forces our staff to work multiple jobs just to provide for basic necessities for themselves and their family.



William Mayo, Board Chair: Angela Bovill, President and CEO

We must do better. We must raise our voices in advocacy for those who serve - for adequate pay for the work they are doing. Otherwise, in addition to the unfairness, we will not be able to serve those who need it. There are simply not enough people who can or will do this critical work, especially if it is valued less than other jobs. It is hard to reconcile how we will pay more for someone to make you a cup of coffee than we do for someone to care for your mother. There is something fundamentally wrong with this picture.

During my recent travels in the field, I was able to meet clients and see our staff through their eyes. One of our In-Home Care clients asked me why we can't pay her caregiver more money. I told her that the world unfortunately doesn't recognize how important this work is and doesn't give us enough money to pay more and we actually lose money providing these services. Then she asked why we continue to do it. I told her that we exist to serve her – because she deserves it. But to continue to do this, we are going to have to find better ways to support our staff to reach their dreams, too.

We need you to join us in this effort. We need your voices raised up in support of critical bills in the legislature that would better fund the work. We need your investments so that we can support our staff emergency fund (which has been almost depleted over the past two years) – and additional investments to provide training and other supports that would help the people who serve. These amazing people have been through a lot the past two years - and they deserve our focus and attention on making sure they are healthy and thriving, too.

We are forever grateful to all of you who are a part of making this journey and mission possible.

Board Chair

President and CEO

The harsh reality is that government funding for the social services sector does not allow for adequate employee supports.



Celebrating 150 years of making a difference in the lives of others

Ascentria's bright future would not be possible without the strength and convictions of our past. We are here today because of the foresight and generosity of a pious brewer by the name of Gottlieb F. Burkhardt, whose summer farm in West Roxbury, MA would eventually become the Martin Luther Orphan's Home at Brook Farm in 1872. A volunteer organization with a commitment to helping children as well as "aged, weak, and helpless persons," Brook Farm would soon be followed by the establishment of a Lutheran agency to assist lonely seafarers on the busy docks of Boston.

Our Social Ministry Had Begun!







1900s





Fast forward 150 years and now in the 21st Century, though we have changed our name our work and commitments are the same. Today, we serve our communities as Ascentria Care Alliance. Like all of the dedicated staff and generous supporters before us, when we were the Lutheran Church or Lutheran Social Services, together, we still lead with our hearts, our hands and our voices committed to inspire people to help one another reach beyond their current circumstances and realize new possibilities.











































Let's look at some of what we have been able to do because of your individual, collective and corporate contributions.



Afghan Resettlement Response

Unprecedented times call for innovation and bold actions

As many of you know, the last four years of dramatically increased restrictions and reduced refugee admissions had left Ascentria with inadequate staffing due to reduced federal funding. Yet despite the slashing of support for immigrants and refugees, we persisted, committed to serve those seeking asylum and refuge from war torn countries and sexual and work exploitation.

Then in September of last year, while ramping up due to increased federal support in 2021, we were notified of the impending arrival of at least 500 Afghans to Massachusetts and New Hampshire over the course of just several months, Ascentria concluded that the only way to approach resettlement at this level and pace would be to

tap into the power of local communities for help. And you responded, overwhelmingly with a resounding "Yes, we will and we must!"

In a matter of weeks, Ascentria partnered with community groups and organizations such as "Worcester Together" as led by the United Way of Central MA and the City of Worcester; also the Shapiro and the Fish Foundations; in New Hampshire, the NH Charitable Foundation and in Western MA Hannoush Realty and the Westfield State University Faith Community Group to build a support network to welcome the Afghan arrivals.



Volunteer caring-circles formed, called Neighborhood Support Teams (NST). These groups operate on a volunteer basis to provide support services like transportation, housing assistance, cultural orientation, and more, while giving Afghan families and individuals the time and space they need to heal. NST members have remarkably raised over \$600,000 to help support the needs of our new Afghan neighbors as they begin

their lives in New England. By organizing over 60 NSTs comprised of over 1,200 volunteers overseen by Ascentria case managers, together we are creating a sustainable community-based model of resettlement. In six months, we have become one of the largest cosponsorship networks in the nation.

Even better yet, we have seen repeatedly how these volunteers are transforming people's lives, providing them with a greater sense of safety and support, and most critically the comfort that comes with their knowing a community is supporting them.

Please take a moment to read about just one of our NSTs.

Neighborhood Support Teams (NST)

NST Team Hope

David and Doreen Rinas are just two of the over 1200 volunteers who generously stepped forward to sponsor Afghan families. They are members of the Refugee Immigration Ministry based in Malden, Massachusetts and have been welcoming refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world for the past twenty years.

Speaking so fondly of their new Afghan neighbors, they have already developed a special bond with them. "Our first family are brothers. A twenty-four year old and a sixteen year old. They are wonderful individuals. One is going to high school, and the other one is taking classes online and looking for a job right now. They have a lot of empathy for their

relatives at home who don't have food and don't have money. So they are frequent customers of Western Union, and I'm proud of them for doing that. Our other family is a delightful family - mom, dad and three children, one and a half and four and seven year old", says Doreen.



With a big smile, Dave chimes in to say "We really love playing with the children."

"Yesterday we took the family to the beach because in Afghanistan, there's no coastline so they had never seen the ocean before. It was February, but they still took off their shoes and were running back and forth into the waves. The man in our family started talking to some other people who looked like they were from Afghanistan. It turns out it was this large group from Harvard, Massachusetts, which was



David and Doreen Rinas, Team Harvard



another NST. They had four families and fifteen children with them, and we were all at the same beach at the same time." recounts Dave.

Dave continues, "There is this aspect of being able to experience another part of the world without having to go anywhere. We have visited other cultures and that's a wonderful experience. But it's also a wonderful experience to have people from another country move into your community and we get to see the world through their eyes."

"It's wonderful to be able to walk with them. Just such a blessing to be able to do this work. And I hope we'll be able to keep doing it. Maybe with people from other places in the world", says Doreen.

We thank the Rinas family for their dedication to helping Afghan people heal and rebuild their lives.

For those who have found their way to the United States having been forced to leave their country and become a refugee, it is a harrowing journey that seeks to remove a sense of dignity, safety, and security. And folks like the Rinas family and many of you have helped to try to restore some of the dignity and help to rebuild lives in a new land.

Thank you to our donors and volunteers who help us continue our mission to restore dignity, safety, and security to all we serve.

Advocacy

Together, changing lives

At Ascentria, we recognize the importance of legislative advocacy as an effective way to bolster causes that support change we are working towards in our communities. To that end, last year we added a director of government relations to the team whose goal is to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.

A focused legislative agenda that thoughtfully prioritizes issues important to the work we do will set the course for maximum success. We have identified and categorized our legislative opportunities as either priority or secondary. The priority topics listed indicate that Ascentria will be a lead advocate on the topics and will allocate proper resources to push the legislative priority through direct legislative contact. Secondary topics indicate that Ascentria will support the projects alongside other organizations with a longer-term view, while providing support to the extent that the topic pertains to Ascentria's mission.

Advocacy does bring about action as evidenced by our efforts that helped secure \$12 million in Massachusetts and over \$200,000 in New Hampshire for Afghan resettlement in those respective states, as well as \$10 million in Massachusetts to support Ukrainian and other refugees.

You can support our advocacy by helping fund these initiatives and responding to action alerts as both actions are essential to the success of any advocacy efforts. Together as a shared voice and collective action we can bring about important change.



Marwa Alnaal, director of goverment affairs

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Priority topics:

- Workforce development related to direct care workers as well as advocating for an easier pathway to the workforce for migrants/refugees
- Refugee and immigrant rights within communities
- Federal earmark requests for capital expenditures in 2022
- Advocating for our staff within our senior care centers by initiating grassroots meetings and site visits of with the legislative representatives of that district.

Shauntel wants to become a nurse

Shauntel arrived at Ruth House with her daughter last September where she found housing in a safe, residential environment that builds individual strengths and help young families move toward self-sufficiency.

Karen Parkman, program manager for the Teen Parenting Program at Ruth House, sang Shauntel's praises calling her "our inspiration and ideal resident." She very quickly mapped out her plan and started working at Bridgewater State Hospital as a case manager picking up extra shifts to build her savings account that allowed her to secure her own apartment in January. Shauntel continues to receive transitional coaching at Ruth House that helps her establish and pursue goals to master budgeting and move forward with her education for a career in nursing.

We caught up with Shauntel to talk with her about her future plans:

You've decided you want to pursue a career in nursing. What are your plans?

"Yes, I've been wanting to go to school for a while for nursing, but it was just too much. I didn't have a stable home and it was just too much to juggle everything at once so I dropped out of college and found this job where I am getting good experience and saving money. I'm going back to school, hopefully, in September for nursing if everything works out and if I can pay for it."

Have you begun to think about how you will pay for schooling?

"I'm going to try to apply for FAFSA (federal student aid) and then whatever else they won't pay for I'm going to try and see if I can work out a monthly payment plan."

What would it mean to you if you could access money from a scholarship fund?

"That would help a lot because school is very expensive and it's only one income for me. It would mean a lot because I really do want to go to school and pursue my education so that I can have a stable income to be able to provide for my kid."

Thank you to our major donor who provided a generous donation to our transition program, and to our recurring donors who have generously committed a monthly gift to support our scholarship fund for motivated youth in our programs.

Still waiting on images so that I can lay this page out.

The road from nothing to nursing

Najma arrived from Somalia in 2016, joined our Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program and began her new life in Worcester, Mass. where one of our generous foster families opened their home to her. Najma speaks fondly of her foster family saying, "I will never forget how they helped me learn English and teach me about American culture. They are a big part of where I am today."

And where is Najma today? After attending Quinsigamond Community College and Umass Boston to earn her bachelors degree in biology, Najma moved to St. Louis, MO where she is studying to become a nurse. Kind donors funded her travel in 2020 through Ascentria's Diomande Scholarship Fund so that she could remain committed to her career pursuits. Speaking of the money she received Najma says, "Please keep donating because it is so important to someone like myself who had no one and nothing. All donations make a huge difference. Money should not be an obstacle to continuing education."

Set to graduate with her nursing degree in April 2023, Najma is looking forward to returning to Massachusetts where her friends live. We are so proud of Najma's motivation and strength and applaud her accomplishments!

Good News Garage

Donated Cars are Still Key after 25 Years

Good News Garage (GNG), a member of Ascentria, celebrated its 25th anniversary with an event at its Burlington, Vermont headquarters last October. Program staff, donors, and clients listened to GNG founder Hal Colston and Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy speak about the importance of GNG's work. At that event, Colston awarded the organization's 5,500th donated car to a young, single mother. It was a highlight for GNG during a tough year for those struggling to move forward in their lives.

A national car shortage has pumped the brakes on vehicle donations. Thankfully, hundreds of generous New Englanders still turned to GNG to help them pass on their keys. These donors enabled us to put nearly 200 clients behind the wheel over the past year! After receiving the keys to a donated 2007 Toyota Matrix, GNG client Adeline Toney from Worcester, Mass. said, "Purchasing a car was out of my reach. Now, I'll be able to pursue my goals."

Another program operated by GNG, Ready To Go, continues to provide essential transportation services across Vermont and Massachusetts via ondemand shuttle rides. Ready To Go's team of 25 friendly drivers provided over 27,000 rides during the calendar year 2021! And during the early stages of the pandemic, these drivers delivered food to families in need!!

"While we can't solve the car shortage, we can certainly help some of those who are being hit the hardest," said Cash Cranson, director of operations at Good News Garage. "But we can't do it alone. During this difficult time, choosing to donate your car is an act of kindness and compassion that makes a tangible, immediate impact."

Did you know that since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, a national car shortage has driven car prices to record highs? This has made it harder than ever for low-income individuals and families to afford reliable vehicles. Every day, GNG hears from more and more people looking for help to overcome their transportation struggles. It's safe to say that after 25 years of continuous service, GNG's mission has never been more important.

Pass your keys to a neighbor in need!





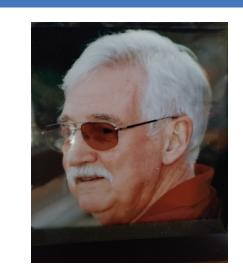
Scan the QR code with your cell phone camera or code reader to watch a video about Adeline's reaction to her donated car from GNG.

Cash Cranson.

director of operations

at GNG

Paul Kennedy



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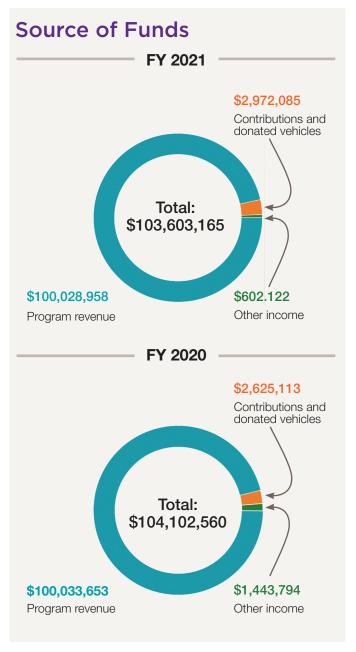
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By the Numbers - FY 2021 Financial Highlights

FY 2021 Program Highlights

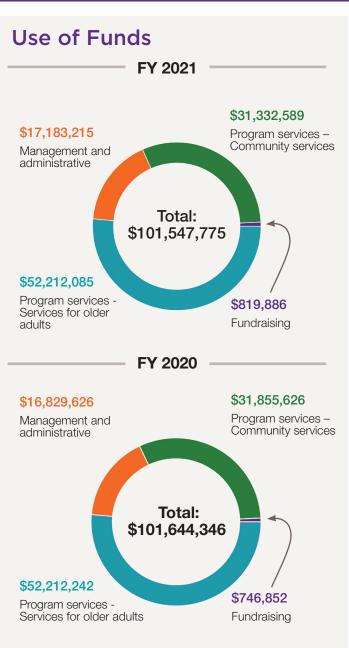




Total revenue
FY2021 \$106M
FY2020 \$104.3M

Total net assets
FY2021 **\$21.2M**FY2020 **\$13M**

The audited financial statements of Ascentria Care Alliance represent the activity of the parent organization and its wholly owned subsidiaries.



600+ seniors served in our six Mass. and Conn. facilities offering independent living, congregate living, assisted living, and skilled nursing/short-term rehabilitation care.

100+ individuals with a Developmental Disability and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder were provided supports in Massachusetts to maintain independence and thrive in their communities.

257 clients served by our 84 Maine staff. This included clients with mental illness and developmental disabilities in both in-home and residential settings.

1,075 SNAP-Ed clients received 195 hours of food/nutrition and access education; 788 home gardening kits and 500 seedlings distributed to West Springfield public school students and program partners.

11 URM/DCS licensed foster homes for our
170 Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) and 31 DCS
foster care clients. In 2021 we had 24 graduates: 18
URMs are high school/HiSET graduates, three obtained
vocational certificates, one earned an associtate's degree
and two earned bachelor's degrees.

69 young mothers and their children supported through our residential teen parenting programs. Of these, 9 teen moms graduated high school or received their GED, 6 are in college, and 5 became licensed Certified Nursing Assistants. Five young moms were connected with mentors from the "Second Acts" initiative.

Florence House update: served 10 families in 2021 and had 2 residents get housing and 1 reunified with her family.

229 refugees resettled in MA and NH in FY21 by our Services for New Americans program. This is a 63 percent decline over FY17, due to reduction in the U.S. refugee admission cap.

900+ clients represented by our Immigration Legal Assistance Program, including asylum

clients, unaccompanied minors and survivors of violence, human trafficking and child abuse.

183 vehicles awarded to New England families through our Good News Garage program. To date, more than 5,500 reliable vehicles have been placed with families in need.

36,432 rides scheduled through our Ready To Go program in VT and MA. Ready To Go provides rides for clients to access essential life activities, including jobs, training and childcare.

321,066 hours of In-Home Care services delivered by approximately 300 personal care service providers to 555 clients ages 19 to 99.

40,443 interpretation appointments filled by 245 interpreters speaking 55 languages through our Language Bank program.

60 youth served in our foster care programs. 49 foster homes were collectively licensed and opened to care for youth in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Updated so far: TFC/IFC, URM, ILAP, IHC, ME MH, GNG, R2G, DD MA, - numbers in red are missing

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Nancy Meegan, Chief Human Resources Officer

Aimee Mitchell, Chief Community Services Officer

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11 Shattuck Street, Worcester, MA 01605

Our Mission

We are called to strengthen communities by empowering people to respond to life's challenges.

Our Vision

We envision thriving communities where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of background or disadvantage.

Together with our partners, we inspire people to help one another reach beyond their current circumstances and realize new possibilities.

Our Values

Faith in Action:
Courage • Compassion • Integrity

