



# the grace center

of Southern Oklahoma

REPORT  
2021



PREPARED BY  
The Grace Center  
Board of Directors  
and Staff

*The Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma honored four outstanding graduates of the Financial Literacy program at the Arbuckle Literacy Leadership Graduation in May 2021. The annual celebration honors the graduates of Arbuckle Literacy Leadership member literacy programs. Graduates earned their GEDs, passed the citizenship exam, completed an English language program, as well as achieved and mastered a financial literacy program.*



### *Mission:*

To prevent homelessness and increase self-sufficiency for all people. The center provides education and resource assistance in a culturally sensitive, encouraging, and Christ-centered environment.

## STAFF

*Staff list includes all staff members employed by Grace Center between Jan. 1, 2021 through Dec. 31, 2021.*

**Laura Eastes Akers, Executive Director**

**Marcia Gentry, Grace Resource Director**

**Karlie Harper, Grace Day Director**

**Sonya Kelly, Grace Day Director**

**Leslie Groven, Office Manager / Housing Case Worker**

**Connie Applegate, Financial Literacy Coordinator**

**Anthony Garringer, Grace Day Assistant Director**

**Michael Case, Grace Day Assistant Director**

**James Baker, Janitorial**

**Jordan Bell, Joshua Billups, Wanda Franklin, Randy McDonald, & Yusef Stevenson, Overnight Monitors**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Active in fiscal year 2021*

**Jacob Tynes, President**

**Carolyn McElroy, Vice President**

**Jesse Rigney, Treasurer**

**Carolyn Thomas, Secretary**

**Jonathan Clubb**

**Meida Lockhart**

**Patrick Madden**

**Frankie Williams**

For the second year in a row, the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma dramatically expanded its suite of services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. More than 2,200 men, women, and children across our five-county region received services during their time of crisis, including electricity and rental assistance, housing search assistance, education in financial literacy and parenting, and school supplies, as well as access to a warm or cool place to shower, rest, eat and be treated with dignity and respect. We achieved exciting milestones such as launching a Rapid Re-Housing program aimed at housing and stabilizing families and individuals following a housing crisis. We reformed education programs to offer small and more frequent classes, as well as dedicated a staff member to parenting and financial literacy classes. We responded to households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the Medical Emergency Fund. We implemented the Point-In-Time Count, a statistical snapshot count of homelessness in our community, which is a necessary step to securing federal programs and funding. We worked closely and



*Vision:*

The Grace Center exists because we believe a community thrives when it can uplift those in need to a more productive position in the community through education and assistance.



collaboratively with organizations, including Lighthouse Behavioral Wellness Centers, Good Shepherd Community Clinic, Catholic Charities, the Family Shelter of Southern Oklahoma, and more. We responded to the deadly eight-day winter storm of February 2021 by operating the Grace Day Center for an additional 28 hours and increasing our budget to address the higher-than-usual household heating costs. We provided comfort and safety to get people off the streets. Most importantly, we believed in people even when others had given up.

On the pages that follow, you will see the Grace Center implementing its mission — preventing homelessness and inspiring self-sufficiency for all people. At the Grace Center, we are proud and humbled to be part of the solution to preventing and ending homelessness while providing hope and grace to so many in need each year. We look forward to continuing our work in partnership with you.



With gratitude,

The Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma Staff and Board

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma, Inc. is dedicated to financial stewardship and maximizing every dollar spent to advance the mission. The last two years were filled with economic uncertainty, the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma walked a firm line as an agency responding to the economic crisis created by the pandemic with caring for our neighbors in need and increasing fund development to meet those rising needs. Thanks to the perseverance and leadership by our board and staff, and strong support from individuals and funders, the Grace Center had financial strength for another year. The Grace Center works with Ardmore CPAs for its bookkeeping services. The figures that are depicted in this report are derived from the financial statements, which the 2021 statement is attached to this report. Each year, the organization hires Russell & Williams CPA's, P.C. to perform an independent financial audit. The audit and the organization's IRS Form 990 are reviewed by the Board of Directors each April. To view the Grace Center's most recent IRS Form 990 and other important documents, please visit [www.ardmoregracecenter.com/about-4](http://www.ardmoregracecenter.com/about-4).

**\$409,342**

Total Revenue

**\$398,037**

Total Expenses

**2021**

**\$422,029**

Total Revenue

**\$377,764**

Total Expenses

**2020**

**\$328,944**

Total Revenue

**\$291,480**

Total Expenses

**2019**

**\$304,296**

Total Revenue

**\$320,150**

Total Expenses

**2018**

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## 2021 IN NUMBERS

### Income Statement\* (As of December 31, 2021)

#### INCOME

<b>Private Foundation Grants</b>	<b>\$206,116.00</b>
<b>Individual Donations &amp; Fundraising</b>	<b>69,497.42</b>
<b>United Way of South Central Oklahoma</b>	<b>43,500.00</b>
<b>Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness</b>	<b>30,888.00</b>
<b>Religious Organization Giving</b>	<b>24,339.25</b>
<b>Endowment</b>	<b>20,974.11</b>
<b>Business Giving</b>	<b>8,885.00</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>850.00</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$409,342.08</b>

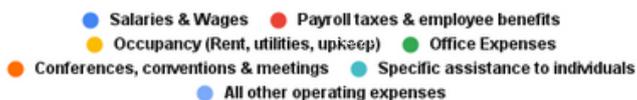
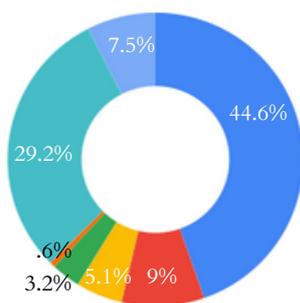
#### EXPENSES

<b>Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	<b>\$177,711.00</b>
<b>Specific Client Assistance</b>	<b>119,053.00</b>
<b>Payroll taxes &amp; Employee Benefits</b>	<b>35,936.00</b>
<b>Other Operating Expenses</b>	<b>30,002.00</b>
<b>Occupancy</b>	<b>20,279.00</b>
<b>Office Expenses (including fundraising)</b>	<b>12,652.00</b>
<b>Conferences, Conventions, &amp; Meetings</b>	<b>2,404.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$398,037</b>

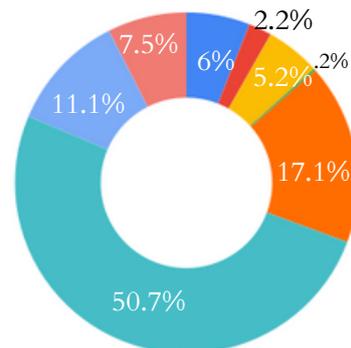


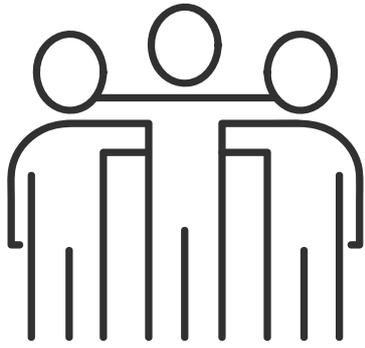
*The Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma staff (from left: Karlie Harper, Anthony Garringer, Laura Akers, Connie Applegate, and Leslie Groven) at the 2021 Film Fundraiser event in August.*

2022 Total Expenses \$398,037.20



2021 Total Revenue \$409,342.08





Grace Center Impact 2021

# THE NUMBERS

**2,232 unique individuals served in 2021**

Since 2019, Grace Center leadership has worked diligently to revise evaluation methods to produce the number of unique individuals served each year. Past evaluation efforts resulted in clients being counted multiple times for receiving multiple points of service.



*The Grace Resource Center team worked with our western Carter County neighbors in need through a walk-in clinic at Mercy Hospital Healdton in June, August, and November 2021. Transportation barriers are often cited as barriers to social services access. These barriers lead to not accessing critical services, which can lead to missed payments, utility shutoffs, evictions, and homelessness. In total, the three clinics resulted in assisting 11 households.*

## **467** Households stabilized by the Grace Resource Center

**The Grace Resource Center provided homeless prevention services to 467 families, impacting 611 adults and 414 children. Through rent assistance, 117 families remained in their homes. The Resource Center kept vital utilities on for families and seniors, which resulted in the payment of 202 electric bills, 106 water bills, 34 natural gas bills, and 1 petroleum bill.**

**In October, the Grace Center launched two new Resource Center programs: Rapid Re-Housing and application assistance for the federal Emergency Housing Voucher. Before the end of 2021, four households went from homelessness to housed in the Rapid Re-Housing program, and 26 households were awarded the Emergency Housing Voucher for rental assistance, similar to the Housing Choice/Section 8 program, by the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency/HUD.**

## NEW HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

In October, the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma launched a Rapid Re-Housing program as part of the organization's homeless prevention efforts and response to growing instances of homelessness. Rapid Re-Housing programs connect families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include short-term financial assistance and targeted support services. The program helps people quickly regain housing stability after experiencing a housing crisis - moving people from the streets and emergency shelters into permanent housing. This homeless intervention has earned the endorsement of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which refers to Rapid Re-Housing as a highly successful and cost-effective way to end homelessness.

Each Rapid Re-Housing household receives a tailored package of assistance based on their strengths and barriers. Some households may only need limited financial assistance to cover rent and move-in costs while others may require housing search assistance, financial assistance, and community referrals to address issues impeding the households' stability. The case management component helps individuals and families set goals and work towards



### RAPID RE-HOUSING



independence when the program's financial assistance ends. Financial assistance is offered for three months but can be one-time assistance depending on the situation. The program focuses on identifying and building upon the strengths of the individual household.

In 2021, the Grace Center enrolled four families in the program. All four families moved into their new rental homes within 30 days of entering the program. Our program participants met their goals, such as entering the workforce, accessing government benefits, building their financial household budget, establishing consistent wellness and health care checks, and accessing mental health services. In total, the program ended homelessness for five adults and five children.

## PARENTING

**41**

**Parents graduated from the Nurturing Parenting Program**

**91**

**In total, 91 parents participated in the Nurturing Parenting Program**

## MORE

Viewed as a line of defense against homelessness, the Emergency Financial Assistance Program covers low-income households' temporary gaps of income during a financial crisis. The program seeks to assist those who are experiencing a one-time financial crisis in their lives. It is for unforeseen emergencies. However, households may receive emergency assistance twice in a 12-month period. In 2021:

**41**

**Households received assistance twice**

**3**

**Households received assistance three times or more**

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS VOUCHERS

For Cindy\*, the Health and Wellness Voucher to the Good Shepherd Community Clinic was a saving grace during a turbulent time in her life. Recently unemployed in the foodservice industry, Cindy was involved in a car collision that left her with a mouth full of shattered teeth. She knew the remaining teeth needed to be extracted and replaced with dentures. Cindy, who was handing in job applications while hiding her smile, couldn't foresee dental work in her future without an income.

Cindy turned to the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma for help. A month earlier, the Grace Center awarded her assistance on her electric bill.

A visit to Dr. Terrick Washington at the Good Shepherd Community Clinic resulted in Cindy' receiving an oral evaluation and extracting four teeth. A follow-up visit resulted in six more of Cindy's teeth extracted. The voucher covered the cost of the dental work that Cindy desperately needed. As a federally qualified health center, the Good Shepherd staff had the expertise to work with Cindy to find and finance dentures.

Cindy's story shows the abilities of the Grace Center's Access to Care program funded by the Mercy Caritas charitable grant program with a \$10,000 grant. Since the program began in July 2020, 59 individuals redeemed a \$95 voucher towards health, dental, and prescription services at Good Shepherd.

*\*Name was changed to protect client identity.*

**23**  
Clients reunited with their families by travel assistance or arrived at an out-of-town rehab program

**54**  
Clients obtained a government-issued ID card

## MEDICAL EMERGENCY FUND

Of those 467 families, 47 received assistance through the Medical Emergency Fund, a specialty fund created through the support MTC Federal Credit Union Foundation to benefit neighbors directly impacted by the pandemic and other unforeseen medical events that affect a family's finances. Medical bills are the leading cause of financial calamity that precedes homelessness. Families who qualify for the fund suffered a loss of earned income due to their medical emergency which results in past due rent and utility bills. Mostly, the medical emergency fund benefits adults without insurance who became ill and missed work (no paid sick leave). The program halts a family from slipping into further financial ruin.



**303**  
Students served by the Back-to-School Assistance program (\$40 supplies voucher)

# FINANCIAL LITERACY



*Left: In summer 2021, the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Red River Valley/Wilson & Ardmore to provide financial literacy lessons to summer campers in Wilson. In the photo, students were participating in a budget activity where they listed their wants and needs. Right: Three graduates from Outcast Under Transformation show their program certificates.*

Beginning in 2021, with strong fundraising for the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma's overall mission, we supported a part-time coordinator for the educational programs. The part-time coordinator averages between 15 to 20 hours each week. In the past, the financial literacy coordinator invested between 40 to 60 hours each month into the program. Our investment into a part-time coordinator thus allows for a greater commitment to the program. In return and as anticipated, the Grace Center has seen improvements in our program's key performance indicators: the number of students impacted.

ProLiteracy, the largest national adult literacy nonprofit organization, serves as the program's major supporter. In the most recent report to ProLiteracy, the Grace Center reported 150 students participated in the program

between July 1, 2021 - Oct. 15, 2021.

In 2021, the Grace Center partnered with Naomi House, Destiny Recovery Center, Broadway House, and Outcasts Under Transformation, Inc. to teach the program to their clients. The visits became much more regular and thus that allowed for more students to enter and complete the program. For example, before a year ago, the Grace Center was visiting Broadway House and Outcasts Under Transformation about once a month. Now, the Grace Center's education coordinator visits once each week.

Additionally, the Grace Center offered the course through the Southern Oklahoma Library System and Ardmore Public Library. Last summer, the Grace Center resumed its focus on youth financial literacy by teaching lessons during the Boys and Girls Club Wilson teen camp.

# GRACE CENTER SAFE SHELTER

Grace Center leadership developed the temporary overnight emergency shelter as an emergency response to the homeless crisis in downtown. It was intended to provide relief to the unsheltered homeless for the remainder of winter. By the early part of 2021, it was estimated that between six to 12 individuals spent the night outside of the Grace Center facility each night. The program accomplished more as it curbed downtown encampments and the complications they bring to the city government, the police department, public health, property owners, and shopkeepers. The program operated as a low-barrier overnight shelter program. People were accepting as they were and provided a safe warm place for shelter. After 47 nights, the program ended after City of Ardmore officials asked the Grace Center to cease the program because the facility lacked a fire sprinkler system.



*Clients sleeping the Day Center during the overnight program in February 2021.*

## SHELTER STATS:

**47**

**nights of service**

**8.2**

**average nightly attendance (facility size allowed for 10)**

**43**

**unique clients served (28 males, 15 females)**

**35**

**clients checked in with identification (clients were welcomed with or without IDs)**

**70**

**age of oldest client served**

**19**

**age of youngest client served**

**179**

**nights of safe shelter by emergency hotel/motel assistance to 37 adults and 24 children. In total, the Grace Center invested \$7,291.16 in hotel/motel assistance paid to area hotels**



*Grace Center staff conducted Point In Time surveys with clients in January 2021.*

**How many people are homeless?**



**129**

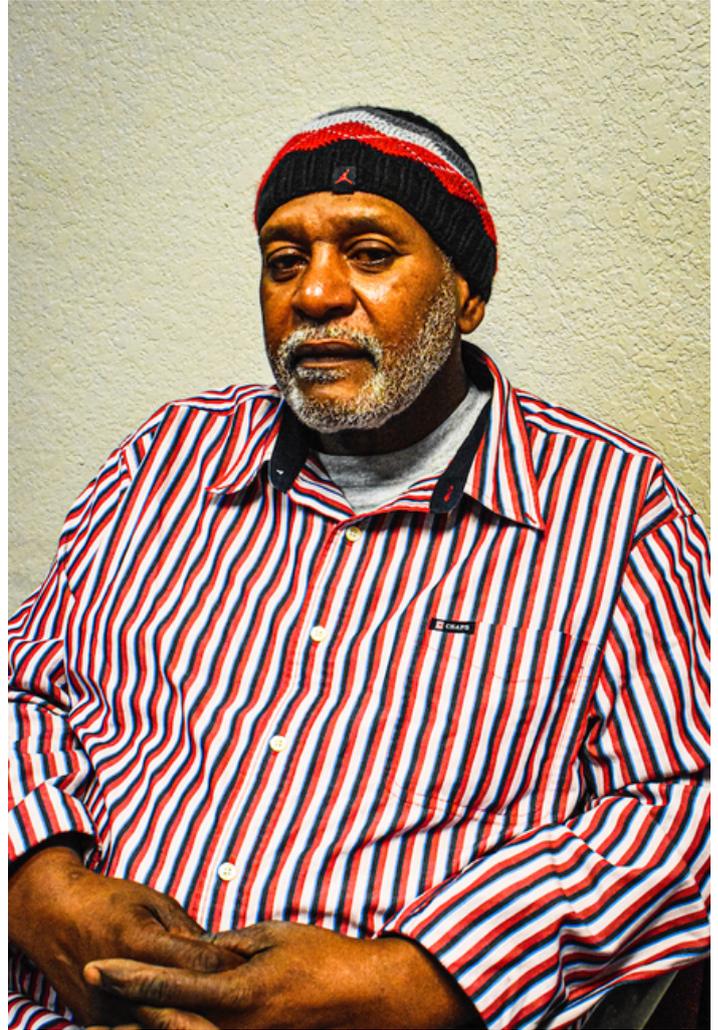
**people were counted as experiencing homelessness through the 2021 Point In Time Count for Carter County. The Grace Center rallied fellow homeless service agencies, including Ardmore City Schools, Ardmore Salvation Army, Community Children's Shelter and Family Service Center, the Family Shelter of Southern Oklahoma, and KI BOIS, to participate in the count for the first time in many years.**

# GRACE DAY CENTER

At the Grace Day Center, where the most vulnerable rely on us, services ensure that basic needs are met. In many ways, we measure success based on meeting needs, such as water, shelter, sleep, food, clothing, and basic hygiene needs. Our clients are broken, trapped in their unique, complex webs of circumstances, and the center provides the space and opportunity to put themselves back together. Relationships are built because that's when change happens, like entering treatment, accepting a mental health diagnosis, or reconnecting with a loved one. Our team meets needs every day. We celebrate when our clients succeed, like finding housing, accepting a job offer, starting mental health services, or getting their birth certificate in the mail.

In 2021, individuals accessing the Grace Day Center increased dramatically. As it has in so many other communities across the country, the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the severity of Ardmore's homeless crisis and lack of resources to respond. Homeless assistance and our housing system is fragmented and difficult to navigate. When a crisis occurs and a person or family is faced with housing loss, there are no quick solutions. Sometimes, the only option is the Ardmore streets.

At the Grace Day Center, three staff members served an increasing number of chronic and unsheltered homeless individuals. Many suffer from mental health and substance abuse disorders as well as unresolved traumas. In January 2021, the Grace Day Center averaged 26 individuals visiting the shelter in a day. In December, the Grace Day Center average rose to 61 individuals, an all-time high for the organization.



*Tommy Mitchell, a Grace Day Center client, was awarded a federal Emergency Housing Voucher with the assistance of Grace Center staff. He will move into an apartment in February 2022 ending his experience with chronic homelessness.*

## DAY CENTER

**775**

**cups of coffee  
poured monthly**

**271**

**showers taken  
monthly**

**102**

**loads of laundry  
washed monthly**

The Grace Center is a United Way of South Central Oklahoma agency, a member organization of Ardmore Literacy Leadership, Inc., a member of the Oklahoma Literacy Council, and part of the Ardmore Behavioral Wellness Collaborative. Additionally, the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma holds membership in the Ardmore Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, and ProLiteracy.

The Grace Center is recognized for completing the Standards for Excellence course by the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits. The certification is valid from 2018-2023.



## OUR YEAR IN PHOTOS