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About PBHA

The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter is a program of the Phillips Brooks House Association. The Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA) is a student-run, community-based, nonprofit public service organization at Harvard University. PBHA is the umbrella organization for 86 student-directed programs, supported by full-time staff members. Together, these programs strive to effect change on multiple levels in the Boston and Cambridge communities. PBHA operates under a dually-focused mission, aiming to provide vital resources to local communities while actively growing public service leaders. Often called “the best courses at Harvard,” PBHA programs provide students with experiences and wisdom that cannot be learned within classroom walls. At the same time, our programs meet genuine community needs in innovative ways, working in close collaboration with constituents and incorporating student initiative and enthusiasm.

Joint History of HSHS & HSSS

The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter opened as an emergency shelter in 1983, followed in 1990 by the opening of St. James Shelter (now The Harvard Square Summer Shelter) as a transitional program. Both initiatives are student-run, and through their distinctly structured shelter programs aim to ameliorate the situations of people experiencing homelessness in the Cambridge and Boston communities.

Over the years HSHS and St. James grew in shared student leaders, volunteers, and best practices, developing a mutually supportive relationship and improving communication. In 2010 St. James Shelter moved into the basement of the University Lutheran Church, the same space HSHS utilizes between November and April. Subsequently, HSHS, St. James Shelter, and PBHA leadership communities decided to merge the two shelter programs under HSHS, introducing The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter Summer (HSSS) Program as a subset of the larger HSHS organization, for the 2014 season.

Our student-led programs have since worked to streamline collaboration and communication, reform and align our policy systems, and more effectively budget and share resources. We are excited to continue building the HSHS and HSSS relationship, as reflected in this first ever Joint Annual Report.
"At the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter, we strive to ensure that our guests are housed in a warm and friendly environment where they feel safe, cared for, and respected."

**HSHS Mission**

The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter serves the homeless community of Cambridge and Boston. The student staff and the University Lutheran Church work together to provide guests with shelter, food, security, and a supportive environment of mutual respect.

In addition to providing these fundamental needs, we work individually with those who seek our assistance as they strive to attain their own goals and make the transition into independent living.

The shelter also serves as a bridge between the homeless and student populations of Cambridge and Boston. By bringing ourselves into closer contact with the homeless, we aim to increase our understanding of the challenges and aspirations of the individuals we serve. By working together in this endeavor we hope to make a difference in the larger effort to confront homelessness.

**HSSS Mission**

The Harvard Square Summer Shelter provides shelter, food, security, full time case management, and a supportive, respectful community to its guests.

In addition to providing these fundamental needs, HSSS strives to provide the full range of support and resources needed to help its guests transition toward permanent housing through guest-driven solutions.

The shelter also serves as a bridge between the homeless and broader community. By bringing ourselves into closer contact with the homeless, we aim to increase our understanding of the challenges and aspirations of the individuals we serve. By working together in this endeavor we hope to make a difference in the larger effort to confront homelessness.
A Message from HSHS Staff

Dear Friends,

This 32nd season for The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter (HSHS) featured exciting innovations in staff administration and guest engagement, as well as a strong new partnership with Y2Y Harvard Square (see below for more information!). We are extremely grateful to members of the Cambridge community and beyond who supported our program and our guests; your time and energy bring winter-defying warmth and generous donations into our space, allowing HSHS to grow as an energetic, effective, and compassionate student-run program.

This season we piloted a newly streamlined approach to behind-the-scenes shelter administration: a “shelter app.” The app is a custom Salesforce page for collecting, organizing, and analyzing program data (e.g. how many meals-to-go volunteers distributed on a given night), designed in collaboration with Y2Y Harvard Square’s Data Directors, PBHA’s Manager of Student Development and Evaluation, Jesse, and our developers, 501 Partners. Throughout the shelter season HSHS staff learned to use the app for everything from running our daily bed lotteries, to recording the storage guests’ bags. Our Technology and Media Director even worked throughout the summer in collaboration with Y2Y Harvard Square’s Data Directors to utilize staff feedback on the app’s functionality in designing a new and improved version, to debut in the 2016-2017 season. We are impressed by the work of our tech teams—including HSHS Tech Director Alika K. ('16) and her successor, Drew H. ('17)—and are hopeful the app will continue to advance our efficiency and accuracy as a service provider.

While HSHS staff was running each shift with new technological prowess, we simultaneously adopted a guest-centered approach to collecting input on the shelter program. Starting in the spring volunteers distributed an optional weekly guest feedback form, each of which asked for guests’ thoughts on a current initiative or policy question facing our student policy board. We are excited to systematize the inclusion of our guests’ viewpoints into our decision-making process, and are hopeful this approach will shape our shelter to be as welcoming and comfortable as possible.

Our guests are at the heart of HSHS’s community and mission; they motivate us to consistently improve, and their needs and experiences should guide the evolution of our services. A resounding example of the impact guests make on our shelter occurred...
on the coldest night of this winter (with temperatures approaching -30 degrees Fahrenheit). Once HSHS had already reached its nightly capacity, one of our guests risked her safety to accompany a man who arrived at our door to a shelter in Boston where he would have a warm place to sleep. We as an organization hope to emulate her compassion—to cherish each emotional conversation between Resource Advocate and Guest, each thank you note left on the kitchen counter, and each reminder of the gaping needs of members of our community—and to challenge ourselves to be the best resource we can.

On those life-threateningly cold nights in Cambridge, HSHS was fielding requests for three or four blankets a night at our door. Fortunately, in addition to regular donations from students and community members, we received a huge donation of blankets from the office of City Councilor Marc McGovern. Each Friday and Sunday night, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School’s Club Four volunteer program provided warm, delicious meals to our guests and to people at our door, as they have for the past 13 seasons. HSHS’s Street Outreach Team circled Harvard Square each night to distribute food and drinks, the donated blankets, warm socks, and winter accessories to people sleeping outside or still seeking shelter. Such generous, proactive community efforts and college and high school student dedication allowed HSHS to persevere as a reliable and comfortable space, even during the brutality of winter.

Through the ups and downs, innovations and wind-chills of this season, HSHS felt the love of our fantastic core of community supporters, local partners, and committed students. The unwavering dedication and positivity of volunteers, Street Team members, and Resource Advocates maximized the availability and quality of opportunities for our guests and our neighbors seeking services throughout this season. Jayms Battaglia of UniLu went above and beyond to meet the needs and answer the questions of volunteers, and to advocate for our guests’ well-being during the coldest Cambridge nights. We are forever grateful for Jayms’s ceaseless commitment to HSHS, for the reflections led by Pastor Reed, and for the entire UniLu community. To everyone who contributed to the HSHS mission this season and in seasons past: thank you. It is your support that upholds such a meaningful community and our opportunity to work alongside our guests, with aspirations towards creating permanent and positive change.

UniLuv,

HSHS Staff
Dear Friends,

The Summer Shelter team began turning its wheels again while snow was still fresh on the ground, taking the first steps to ensuring a great summer program. Throughout the spring semester we collaborated with HSHS staff, PBHA, and the University Lutheran Church to prepare and establish policies and procedures for the coming season.

This year we utilized the longer, seven-week stay of the Summer Shelter as an opportunity to prioritize guests arriving at their goal of finding housing. We reviewed many applications and, through tough decisions, admitted twelve guests who demonstrated progress towards achieving sustainable housing through their personal and professional achievements. Our guests served as invaluable members of our close community, offering inspiration through their own commitment to overcoming homelessness as well as their wealth of experience and unique personalities.

At the heart of our nightly operations stood our cohort of over one hundred volunteers, whose compassion and commitment manifested as genuinely impressive work. Our fabulous group of college and summer school students, locals, and other community members created a welcoming environment, and established positive relationships with guests. Evenings and early mornings were full of delicious smells, enriching conversation, bright laughter, and at one point a particularly lively viewing of the Cavaliers’ impressive “Believeland” feat of 2016.

Impactful support in the form of ingredients for healthy, wholesome meals, came from devoted organizations including the Harvard Community Garden, Salt&Olive, and Food for Free. Our guests expressed the utmost appreciation for community contributions, including Sweet Harvard Square’s made substantial donations of baked treats, and J.P. Licks holiday treat of one hundred servings of ice cream on the fourth of July!

“Deciding to be a supervisor was one of the best decisions I have made in a long time. It was the highlight of my summer.”
-HSSS staff member
We are very grateful for local organizations like the Cambridge Multi-Service Center and other local shelters, not only for the work they do year-round with individuals experiencing homelessness, but also for their contributions to our case management in the form of training, advice, and housing resources and opportunities.

In order to continually self-assess and improve to better meet the needs of our guests, shelter staff - along with one of HSHS’s Administrative Directors, the wonderful Isobel G. - discussed potential for the growth of our program, during weekly staff, policy, and working-group meetings. Our team learned a lot about and supported one another throughout our convenings, meanwhile reflecting on the efficacy of everything from HSSS case-management model, to the number of guests and everyday door policies.

The hard work of our guests and their collaboration with HSSS case managers is demonstrated by the outcomes of this summer’s program: roughly a third of our guests overcame homelessness through sustainable housing solutions, others were able to enter long-term transitional programs, and others achieved goals such as developing résumés, attending job interviews and finding new jobs, and acquiring essential ID’s and other resources.

The running of the shelter in this year and all years is dependent upon a dense network of committed partners and friends. Our shelter can be more than just a space, and can provide services, safety, and community for our guests, only through the hospitality and support of the University Lutheran Church, the donations of businesses and partnerships with nonprofits across the Greater Boston Area, the professional guidance of the Phillips Brooks House Association, and the energy of our beloved volunteers. This summer has been one of growth in the face of challenges, of acts of selfless service, of new and inspiring friendships, and of endless positive experiences that instilled in the shelter community an enthusiasm and an eagerness to continue this important work.

“Every shelter should be run like this one.”
-HSSS guest

Warm wishes and cool breezes,
The HSSS Crew
HSHS By the Numbers
The Basics

From November 1, 2015 to April 15, 2016, HSHS provided beds for 240 Unique Individuals.

We have 24 beds for two-week guests.

On average, we received 12 callers per two-week bed lottery, but rarely had more than 1 or 2 beds to give away.

Demographics

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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Race</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Client Doesn't Know/Refused</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
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<th>GENDER IDENTITY</th>
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<tr>
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<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Identified</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>18-24 years old</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34 years old</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44 years old</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54 years old</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-61 years old</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62+ years old</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food & Other Services

- **4,814 DINNERS**
  Delivered from HUDS by Food For Free, and served by volunteers to guests staying at HSHS.

- **2,388 DINNERS "TO GO"**
  Offered at the shelter door, as well as hot coffee, tea, or juice.

- **714 T-PASSES**
  Two-way trip passes, given out at our door, or by our in-house, student case managers.
Our Programs

**HSHS Street Team Deliveries**

- 365 Sandwiches
- 775 Beverages
- 237 Blankets
- 331 Handwarmers
- 442 Pairs of Socks

3 members of HSHS's Street Team circle Harvard Square every night to deliver food, toiletries, warm accessories to people without shelter, and to offer them connections to resources.

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**Work Contract Program**

Four guests at a time can hold a 10-week bed. Guests are eligible if they are working 20 hrs/wk, and can save $200 each week. Enrolled guests meet weekly with the Work Contract Directors to discuss their progress.

This season, of the six guests who enrolled in Work Contract throughout the season, four of them successfully found housing.

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**Resource Advocacy Program**

Every night 2-3 student case managers (Resource Advocates) work with HSHS guests on connecting to local services or accessing resources - including housing, insurance, medical care, clothing, and more.

**UNITS**

- Food Stamp Applications: 5
- SSI/SSDI: 3
- Veteran Benefits: 1
- Unemployment Benefits: 1
- MassHealth: 1
- Medical Appointment: 2
- Mental Health: 3
- Dental: 3

**Types of Resources Offered this Season**

- 8 Visual
- 7 Employment
- 1 Education/Training
- 7 Legal Resources
- 31 Permanent Housing
- 11 Transitional Housing
- 1 Day Program
- 26 ID/Documentation

**DISTRIBUTION**

- SS/SSD (2.83%)
- Veteran Benefits (0.94%)
- Unemployment Benefits (0.94%)
- MassHealth (2.83%)
- Dental (2.83%)
- Visual (7.55%)
- Employment (6.60%)
- Education/Training (0.94%)
- Legal Resources (6.60%)
- Permanent Housing (29.25%)
- Transitional Housing (10.36%)
- Day Program (0.94%)
- ID/Documentation (24.53%)
Thank you to HSHS Finance Director, Liv N., and to the entire PBHA Finance team, including 2015 Treasurer, Miles M., and 2016 & 2017 Treasurer, Olivia C.!
HSSS By the Numbers

HSSS Finances
2/2016 - 1/2017

INCOME

$450.00 Individual Contributions
$14,713.00 Organizational Contributions and Grants
$99.54 Special Fundraising Events

$15,262.54 Total Income

EXPENSES

$8,598.38 Payroll
$594.78 Total Food & Beverages
$779.26 Total Phone Charges
$9.40 Total Postage & Mailing Services
$6,389.19 Total Rental/Cleaning of Space
$316.58 Total Supplies
$504.95 Total Travel
$25.00 Other Services Not Listed

$17,217.54 Total Expenses

Net Income: ($1,955.00)
Congratulations to HSHS & HSSS graduates!

Alika K.
Allison T.
Amanda H.
Andrew S.
Brianna B.
Elizabeth G.

Jackson G.
James G.
Jessica L.
Kevin E.
Nicky G.
Ryan O.

In the coming season our guests will ask about graduated staff, wondering when they are on shift; alumni leave big shoes for us to fill. With each new season staff strives to follow in the footsteps of inspiring shelter graduates who modeled hard work, strengthened our community, and prioritized consistent and thoughtful services for guests. Thank you!
In the winter of 2015, HSHS alumni Sarah Rosenkrantz ‘14 and Sam Greenberg ‘14 - along with a staff of extensively trained college and graduate students - opened a shelter in the basement of Harvard Square’s First Parish Church, for young adults experiencing homelessness: **Y2Y Harvard Square: Young Adults Uniting to End Homelessness.** Y2Y Harvard Square is the first shelter of its kind, featuring an exceedingly thoughtful youth-to-youth model inspired by HSHS’s student-led approach.

HSHS staff collaborated with their Y2Y counterparts throughout the shelter season to ensure effective and efficient communication and to share resources whenever possible. We at HSHS are already learning from Y2Y Harvard Square’s innovations and successes, and are enjoying having an even larger community of students - a shelter family - passionate about working to end homelessness.

The strong HSHS-Y2Y Harvard Square partnership came to life with PBHA’s annual **Housing Awareness Week**, which raises awareness about the challenges of obtaining a safe, stable place to live. The week was organized by PBHA’s Advocacy, Health, and Housing Programming Group Officer, Anwar O., in partnership between HSHS, Y2Y Harvard Square, and Harvard’s Habitat for Humanity. We started the week off with Don Sawyer’s powerful documentary, *Under the Bridge: The Criminalization of Homelessness*, and concluded it with a discussion with Director of Massachusetts Alliance of HUD Tenants. An HSHS and HSSS organized display outside Harvard’s Science Center featured quotes from shelter guests, describing what they wish people knew about their experiences of homelessness. We were excited to see the powerful and meaningful community advocacy work that was possible through our collaboration with Y2Y Harvard Square, and are excited for future such opportunities.

Visit [y2yharvardsquare.org](http://y2yharvardsquare.org) for more information on this exciting new shelter!
**Getting Involved**

**Volunteer with Us!**
Look out for an email with our signup form - at the start of the fall and spring semesters for HSHS, and in March and April for HSSS. During holidays and college vacation weeks we depend on community members to sign up for daily volunteering slots.

**Not on our email lists? Contact us!**
- For media requests or general questions: hshs.info@gmail.com
- About how to volunteer with HSHS: hshs.volunteer@gmail.com
- To make in-kind donations or inquire as to our needs: hshs.donation@gmail.com
- To contact the summer shelter: summerhshs@pbha.org

**Visit hshshelter.org for more information!**

The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter (HSHS) is a student-run emergency shelter serving 24 two-week guests, operating between **November 1st and April 15th**. The shelter is open for guests between 7pm and 8am (or 9am on Saturdays), We are located in the **basement of the University Lutheran Church at 66 Winthrop Street in Cambridge, MA**. Depending on the shift they attend, volunteers might serve a meal or snacks, talk to and assist guests, or cooperate in keeping the space clean.

Harvard Square Summer Shelter (HSSS), originally known as the St. James Summer Shelter, HSSS is a student-run transitional shelter that opened in 1990. This summer, HSSS served in total 15 guests, but no more than 13 at a time. Each HSSS guest is offered an uninterrupted stay for the full seven-week duration of the summer program, or until they transition into housing. Staff and volunteers are at work between the hours of 6PM and 9AM the following morning as they cook and serve dinner and breakfast, prepare to-go lunches, assist guests throughout the night, cleaning, and always ensuring that all the shelter operations are running smoothly. Volunteers include students from Harvard College, Harvard Summer School, as well as a wide range of other dedicated students and community members.

**Thank you for your support!**