



Our Mission

Hope Acts' mission is to provide housing, English classes and other resources that support immigrants in transitioning to life in Greater Portland and in achieving their goals for a successful future.

Our Vision

Our vision is for a community where immigrants are welcomed, and empowered socially, emotionally, physically and economically.



Hope Acts

PO Box 7615
Portland, ME 04112

207-228-1140 or 207-274-6005

Hopeacts.org

[Facebook.com/HopeActs](https://www.facebook.com/HopeActs)

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Heidi Haseltine:
Richard Blanco event

“Despite the immediate hardships I held on to the promise of not giving up.”



Hope Acts 2019 Impact Report



“Now we’re able to serve whole families as walk-in clients.”

Reflections of Hope and Resilience

“Hope House is my first family in the United States.”



2019 Financials

Hope Acts ended 2019 with nearly \$33K net income. The majority of expenses directly support our transitional housing, ASAP and HHELP programs.



Martha Stein



John Thibodeau

Dear Friends,

As we write this letter, we are grappling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and 2019 feels like a very long time ago! Last year, you showed us that you cared deeply about the immigrant community—you donated, volunteered and advocated for asylum seekers.

Because of your generosity, Hope House continues to offer assistance to any asylum seeker needing a helping hand.

2019 was a very uncertain time for asylum seekers. We are grateful to our community for standing with immigrants against xenophobic, racist policies and actions. We will always remember your gifts and words of support.

One beautiful example is the quilts you'll see throughout this report. Sewn, donated and shipped by Patricia—a special woman who lives across the country—the "African Queen" quilts represent the queen mothers and African women of power, and they were raffled to raise money for our programs. We consider these quilts symbols of how our residents, students and clients have been wrapped in love and support by all of you.

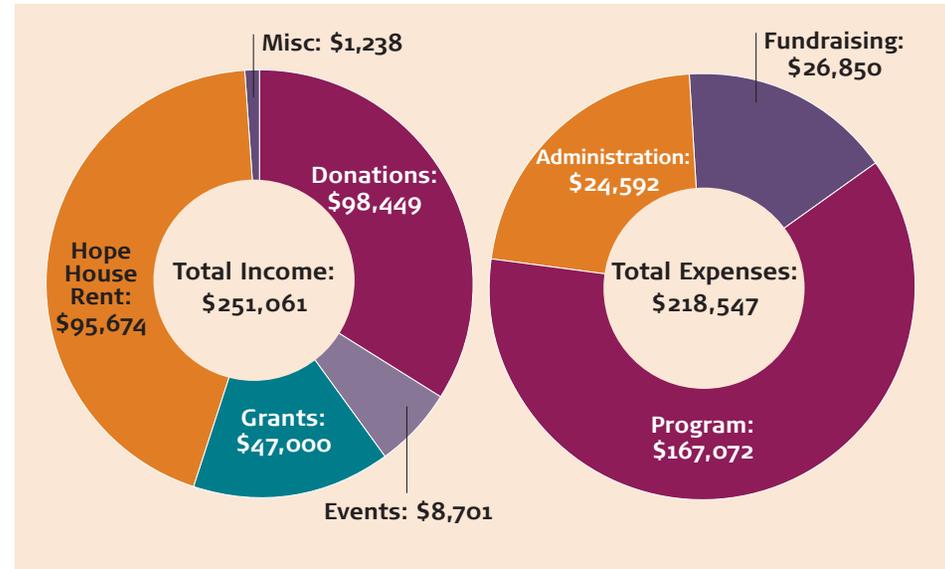
As we write this letter in mid-2020, it is hard to imagine what the rest of this year will bring. Whenever it is safe to resume normal activities, we look forward to welcoming our 70th resident to Hope House and returning to live English classes and in-person services.

Thank you to our loyal donors and over 100 new financial supporters for your financial gifts. We also appreciate the thousands of volunteer hours. Your compassion toward our asylum seeker community and your contributions to Hope Acts mean the world to us.

Sincerely,

Martha Stein
Executive Director

John Thibodeau
President, Board of Directors



2019 Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash in Bank	\$128,309
Fixed Assets	\$13,219

TOTAL ASSETS

\$141,528

Liability and Equity

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$13,392
Other Current Liabilities	\$6,347

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$19,739

Equity

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$60,088
Furniture/Fixtures	\$18,046
Temp. Restricted Funds	\$11,107
Net Income	\$32,547

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES

\$141,528

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

■ **258 asylum seekers, including 33 families with a total of 78 children, received assistance from the ASAP program.**

We worked with clients to secure housing, complete job applications, obtain medical appointments and more.

■ **185 work permit authorization forms were completed in less than 4 months** with the assistance of ASAP volunteers. The Federal Employment Authorization (EAD) documents are essential for asylum seekers to obtain permission to work in the U.S.

■ **130 students from 18 countries received English classes from HHELP.**

■ **66 asylum seekers have lived at Hope House since we opened our doors in 2013.**

■ **8,700 volunteer hours were contributed to Hope Acts in 2019.** That's equivalent to over \$220,000 worth of time.

■ **Hope House residents volunteered at the Portland Expo,** providing translation, preparing meals and offering friendship and hope to new asylum seeking families who were given temporary shelter at the Expo.

■ **"An Evening with Richard Blanco: Speaking on Immigration,"** a benefit for Hope Acts in August, included the award-winning poet Richard Blanco reading from his latest book "How to Love a Country."



**Housing Asylum Seekers.
Helping Immigrants Succeed.**



Hope House—Transitional Housing

Hope House is the first American home for up to 13 asylum seekers in Greater Portland. As Maine's only transitional housing specifically for asylum seekers, we provide one-on-one support in a warm, family-like environment.



Hope House English Language Program (HHELP)

The Hope House English Language Program (HHELP) offers the opportunity for beginner and intermediate adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students to develop and practice their reading, writing, listening and spoken English Language skills in small, supportive classes.



Asylum Seeker Assistance Program (ASAP)

ASAP serves asylum seekers who are working to reestablish their lives. ASAP social work interns and volunteers help asylum seekers complete work permit applications, a critical step for many. They also assist with accessing and navigating resources such as housing, jobs and other critical needs. With assistance from French and Portuguese speaking translators, ASAP workers troubleshoot, advocate for and provide emotional support for clients. ASAP is open to all asylum seekers, including families with children.

**“We are all neighbors:”
Donna and Henry Isaacs
generously give expertise,
time and financial
contributions**

Donna Isaacs is a co-founder of Hope Acts’ Hope House English Language Program (HHELP) and has led numerous teacher development workshops to the volunteer team. Her husband, Henry Isaacs, is a renowned visual artist. After recently moving to Vermont, the Isaacs remain avid supporters of Hope Acts.



**Why do you believe in
Hope Acts?**

Henry: I see what Hope Acts does and that our dollars are helping. Geography doesn’t matter. It is helping everyone. Who knows who our newest neighbors will be next month or tomorrow or where they will be from? We’re all neighbors and we all need help.

We give whenever we can to Hope

Acts because it presents a clear and obvious way of helping people that makes sense. What’s put together as services from Hope Acts is universal.

**As one of the founding members
of HHELP, how have you seen its
current programs evolve?**

Donna: One of the sort of twinkles that came out of a workshop was thinking about social work services that could be hosted at Hope House, that would be open to anyone. The other really big brainstorm was what ultimately became the Portland area ESOL collaborative.

What if we were able to collaborate with all these groups instead of repeating what each other are doing? Find the gaps. A lot of those seeds got planted in the early visioning.

What makes Hope Acts unique?

Donna: I think the biggest thing is that Hope Acts is a program that has a skeleton, but it also has the flexibility to be as responsive as necessary.

**“Taking a visible stance
about immigrants is needed
in this moment” says board
member Carter Friend**

Carter Friend is Deputy Director at the York County Community Action Program. He mentors two Hope House residents. He joined the Hope Acts Board in 2019.

**What makes
Hope Acts
unique?**

An organization is all about its people, and the people that founded Hope Acts are passionate and smart people. There are amazing people on the staff and the board. People that are really passionate about the organization.

It’s also about the people we’re working with. Their journey to get here has been incredibly difficult. They are courageous, talented, motivated and driven people who want to be part of our community.

**What are the greatest strengths
of Hope Acts’ programs?**

One of Hope Acts greatest strengths is that the programs are responsive to community needs. We’re close partners with Portland Adult Education and others. We’re doing that really well, partnering and not duplicating efforts. We are able to share volunteers, and

to find where there is still need. The work authorization program began in this way, when ILAP (Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project) communicated that it would help them by freeing up other resources.



**What is most rewarding
about being on the board of
Hope Acts?**

Being on the board has been rewarding in understanding the organization, trying to get out there and get vocal about issues relating to what we’re doing.

At this moment in time in this country, it’s important to be taking a visible stance.

Bénédicte discovers a home, a family in the U.S. and more at Hope House

Bénédicte, a Hope House resident and HHELP student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, currently works in the social services sector of Portland. She is taking several classes at Portland Adult Education with a goal of returning to her previous career in legal services and advocacy for disadvantaged people. Here, she shares why Hope Acts is so important to her.

What is special about Hope House?

It's a good family for me. I think of it like my second family, but it's my first family in the United States.

At Hope House you can live and



you can learn English. Because I am disabled, in the winter it is hard for me to walk on the ice. With the school here in the basement, I can walk for a little bit and I will find my class.

How have the social work interns helped you?

The interns and social workers are like our way to integration. If I have a form from my doctor, and if my English is not good enough because I am still learning, they are able to explain everything about the letters.

Do you have a mentor? What do you do together?

Your mentor, it's like your friend—your best friend. You can talk about your private life and get advice about a problem or a pain in your heart. I love my mentor so much.

New English language speaker Daniel shares his story of perseverance

Daniel, originally from Angola, is a former Hope House resident and HHELP graduate. He works full-time while taking classes. In speaking at the special Richard Blanco event, Daniel shared the following about his journey to call Maine home:

I arrived here in Portland by bus from New York. I knew no one, and I could barely speak the language. Despite the immediate hardships I held on to the promise of not giving up...

...Hope Acts helped me get a furnished apartment at Hope House. They also helped me obtain some warm clothes and most everything else that I would need...They connected me with good people



who accepted me as if I was a member of their families.

How did Hope Acts help you to learn English?

If you don't speak in English, there are lower levels to help you move up. Today I am speaking English as well as I am because of Hope House.

What do you want for your future in the U.S.?

I'm hoping to become a nurse. Apart from CNA classes, I'm taking a high school diploma class. When I have my diploma, I will go to university for nursing here in Maine. I want to stay here in Maine. I'm staying home, here in Maine.

How did it feel to speak at the Richard Blanco event?

I was very proud of me! That program had a lot of people! I was very excited.

Reflections of Hope and Resilience



Work permit successes of ASAP clients made possible by dedicated volunteers

Volunteer profile: Roy Fox

Roy Fox is a local artist and musician who volunteers weekly in Hope Acts' work authorization permit program, a new facet of ASAP. He came to Hope Acts via Welcoming the Stranger.

What is memorable about your work with clients?

All the clients are extremely warm and appreciative; I never sense anger or bitterness from them despite the cruel hardships they've endured. It's very rewarding when a



client returns with their work permit in hand.

What sparked your interest in working with asylum seekers?

My parents were asylum seekers in 1949. It's a theme I grew up with. I met S. through the volunteer group Welcoming the Stranger and I've mentored him for about a year and a half. It was a very formal relationship in the beginning. Over time, we grew to enjoy each other and even got to joke around.

S's gratitude and concern for me is a great gift. He often says, "someday you will meet my family in Africa and I will show you the beautiful country there..."

Volunteer profile: Yana Davis

Yana Davis began an internship with Hope Acts' ASAP in 2019 as part of her graduate studies in social work at the University of Southern Maine.

What are the challenges and rewards of working with a new program?

I think the challenge and the reward is the increased numbers of people. Starting in June or July of 2019, the need for services increased and put a lot of additional pressure on resources. Hope Acts previously served adult asylum seekers, and now we're able to serve whole families as walk-in clients. There isn't a certain level of your asylum point you have to be to



access services.

What is special to you about ASAP?

Seeing especially young moms who come in—they may or may not be having their first child, or are alone here. You're working alongside them, trying to be like a family member, or an aunty, trying to support them every way you can.

What is so memorable about working with Hope Acts?

I love the informal, family-feel of the organization. I'm always surprised when I get messages or even just emojis from clients on WhatsApp. And just the feeling on a Wednesday afternoon, when we're reaching the apex of work permits.