



*End of Calendar Year Update
for
Friends of Inspirica
December, 2017*

I hope this note finds you well, preparing for a joyous holiday season with friends and family. This is a wonderful time of year. It's a moment when, amidst the busyness (yes – it's a word) of our daily lives, we slow down and take time to appreciate all that we have.

It's also a moment when those of us at Inspirica are on guard. The holidays are often a dangerous time of year for the people we serve. It's a time that can lead to serious depression. The year is ending on a painful note. They don't have the things we appreciate most: the safety and stability of a home; the love of family; and, in many cases, a sense of dignity and worth.



Reading Time!

Nishaie P. and children in our Infant/Toddler Center

This is the reason Inspirica exists. We're here to help people who need us. Our mission is to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people achieve – and maintain – permanent housing and stability in their lives. And from this, much else follows: dignity, joy, independence, a sense of purpose, and renewed ties with family.

Fortunately, we are very successful at what we do. It is my pleasure to share with you this end-of-year report. As you will see, once again we have achieved record results across the board.

I want to start by **THANKING YOU** for making it all possible. Your investment in us has allowed us to make a record number of job placements, move a record number of people from the streets into permanent housing, and ensure that the record number of children in our care who otherwise would almost certainly grow up to be homeless, now will not. In short, your support has turned despair into jobs, homes, smiles and hope. It has literally saved lives.

The pages that follow are only a (small) window into the massive impact you have on the people we serve. The truth is quite simple: we can only do what we do with you. I cannot overstate this fact. Together, we make a great team. Thank you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason T. Shaplen".

Jason T. Shaplen
Chief Executive Officer

THE NEED

In 2017, we once again achieved record results across the board, surpassing our record results in each of the last several years.

And yet the need for our services has never been greater.

Why? The answer is basic economics. The Stamford-Norwalk metropolitan area is now the 5th most expensive housing jurisdiction in the nation. While most daily expenses here track a few percentage points above national norms, housing costs are an outlier – they are more than double the national average.



Going up . . . and out of reach

This has resulted in a different kind of homelessness: economic homelessness. While mental illness and substance abuse still play an outsized role, the rising cost of living coupled with wage stagnation are leading to increasing homelessness. Compounding this reality is the fact that 92 months since the end of the Great Recession, Connecticut has recovered only 73% of the jobs it lost during the downturn, making it one of less than 10 states in the nation that has not yet recovered to pre-recession levels. In most cases, jobs that have been recovered pay less than those they replaced.

The gap between declining monthly salaries and soaring monthly rents means demand for our services remains close to record levels. Indeed, while the number of people who are living on the streets or in shelters in our community dropped an impressive 18% from January, 2016 to January, 2017 (the last time a survey was conducted), one statistic stands out. **Even with this impressive decline, the number of people who are living in shelters or on the streets in our area is the same level as it was at the end of the Great Recession in 2010 (when unemployment was 10.1%).** In short, our short-term progress is good, but our longitudinal progress shows we are not yet close to the finish line.

How can homelessness be down while the number of people turning to us for help is still so high? The answer is simple. We are more effective than ever in addressing it. **We're able to move people from the streets into permanent homes in the community faster than ever.**

We are able to do this because we provide them not only with emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, deeply affordable housing and rapid rehousing, but also comprehensive support services that address the root causes of their homelessness. These include vocational training, workforce education, employment services, job and housing retention support, children's services, early childhood & parenting services, health care . . . and much more. Our comprehensive, end-to-end platform of residential and support services goes to the core of our mission: to break the cycle of homelessness. It's a unique, thoughtful – and powerful – approach.

RESULTS

2017 brought another year of strong results. With the help of volunteers, donors and friends, we were able to meet the needs of the growing number of homeless men, women and children in our community. We are one of only a few organizations in the nation that is able to address both the physical aspect of homelessness (residential services) and its underlying root causes (support services) on a single, powerful, end-to-end platform in which programs are fully integrated and leverage each other. Our unique ability to address the needs of our clients holistically and comprehensively in a one-stop-shop setting, eliminates gaps in services and exponentially increases our success rate.

Providing end-to-end services is one thing. But achieving results is quite another. **At Inspirica, we are intensely focused on outcomes that matter.** We track results meticulously, allowing us to better manage our programs and achieve our mission. Some people think of us as a social services organization. Some think of us as a business. We think of ourselves as both.

We are pleased to report that our results over the past year have reached record levels in almost every category.

RESULTS!

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017

Job Placements: 200

Housing Placements: 204

First Five Months Current Fiscal Year

Job Placements: 92

Housing Placements: 92

Past Seven Fiscal Years + Five Months

Job Placements: 1,360

Housing Placements: 1,197



*Up, up and away (Part 1) . . .
Record job placements in 2017!*

Job Placements

As we noted above, the face of homelessness has changed. While many of the people we serve suffer from mental illness, medical illness and/or substance abuse, an increasing number are purely economically homeless, meaning the primary reason they are homeless is a lack of sufficient income. As such, employment is essential to ensuring their exit from homelessness. To this end, our Jumpstart Career Program is an integral part of our work, providing them with the tools they need to prepare for, find, maintain and advance in employment. In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, we made 200 job placements. Our average starting salary was \$12.47 per hour (23% above minimum wage), up from \$11.74 per hour the year before. Equally important, the people we placed in jobs worked an average of 32.2 hours per week.

Over the 12 months ending November 30, we have increased these numbers. We have made a record 213 job placements. Our average starting wage this fiscal year is a record \$12.63 (25% above minimum wage) and people are working 30.6 hours per week. A full 97% of these people earn \$10 per hour or more, 51% earn \$11 per hour or more, and 40% earn \$12 per hour or more.

Housing Placements

Our success in making job placements is directly tied to our success in moving people from the streets to permanent homes of their own in the community. In FY17, we moved a record 204 men, women and children into permanent housing. **Over the past 12 months ending November 30, 2017 this figure had risen to a new record of 213.**



*Up, up and away (Part 2) . . .
Record housing placements in 2017!*



To be sure, these are strong numbers. But when you put them into context, our impact becomes even clearer. **With your support, over the past seven fiscal years and the first five months of this fiscal year, we have made a record 1,360 job placements and moved 1,197 people into permanent housing!**

Job and Housing Retention

Breaking the cycle of homelessness means being the final stop on a person's journey through homelessness – a journey that far too often is intergenerational.

Finding a job and a home is the first step. Staying employed and housed is the next. That's where we excel. Inspirica is unique for its focus on job and housing retention. We have a four-person dedicated team whose sole mission is to help people after they leave us. The results speak for themselves.

JOB RETENTION

Remain employed after 1 month: 98%
Remain employed after 3 months: 89%
Remain employed after 6 months: 78%

HOUSING RETENTION

Remain housed after 1 month: 100%
Remain housed after 3 months: 100%
Remain housed after 6 months: 100%

Note: These numbers far exceed the national average. For example, the average job retention rate at three months ranges from 36%-52%

TOGETHER WE ARE BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS!

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Poverty and homelessness are far too often intergenerational. Despite this, society tends to look at short-term solutions to addressing them. Specifically, society believes if we can house a person we have solved their homelessness. At Inspirica, we don't agree. Housing someone in the short term does not mean we have broken the intergenerational cycle of homelessness. Inspirica's mission is not to make short-term housing placements. Rather, it is much higher: to fundamentally break the cycle of homelessness once and for all.

One of the most effective ways to do this is through children. We believe that to end intergenerational homelessness we have to address *all* components of the family: adults and children alike. As we wrote above, we provide the adults we serve with the life and work skills they need to find, maintain and advance in jobs that provide the income necessary to secure an apartment. That is only part of the equation. At the same time we do this, we provide their children with the critical foundation they need to overcome serious learning and developmental deficits, and develop in line with their peers who are not homeless. **It's a powerful two-generation approach.**

The statistics surrounding homeless children are staggering. They are sick 4x more often than children who are not homeless, have 4x the rate of developmental problems, 3x the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, and 2x the rate of learning disabilities. Reading and math proficiency for homeless children in high school is just 11% and 14%, respectively. Less than 25% of them graduate. For pre-school children ages 0-5, the statistics are even more alarming. By age three "welfare children" hear 32 million fewer words than their peers in families with college-educated parents. The impact on future learning and success is typically irreversible. Statistics show that homeless children begin to demonstrate significant developmental delays after just 18 months of age – delays which later develop into behavioral/emotional problems and regressed speech. Up to 80% of children in homeless shelters do not read at grade level – an alarming statistic when coupled with the fact that 65% of children who do not read at level by grade 4 end up either in jail or on welfare.

Our innovative approach to serving homeless children has five components. We address their foundational needs, psychological/development needs and educational needs. We also operate an afterschool program during the school year as well as an Early Childhood & Parenting Program for children ages 0-5 and their parents. In addition to all this, over the past summer we sent 45 children (100% of those eligible) to summer camp on scholarships where they continued to develop in line with their non-homeless peers during the critical non-school months. We also sent 28 kids to spring camp at Camp Seton in Greenwich.

The attention we pay to children – which is very unusual for a homeless organization – pays huge dividends. Despite the statistics above and the overwhelming odds against them 99% of our children matriculated to the next grade level this past year. Their average grade was a B-!

BREAKING GROUND!

Inspirica is 138 years old. When your history goes back that far, you choose what constitutes a milestone carefully. Even with this context, we can say that 2017 was a milestone year for Inspirica when it came to breaking ground – literally and figuratively!

SUMMER PLACE: In April of this year, we opened our first major development project in more than two decades – Summer Place (992 Summer Street). The 40,000-square-foot building is home to 53 seniors (age 55+) in 48 apartments, including 40 one-bedroom units and 8 studios. The building, located in the heart of downtown Stamford, includes a mix of subsidized and deeply affordable units for the low-income elderly, a segment of our population that is rapidly falling into poverty and homelessness. The building not only provides essential housing, but also includes critical onsite services such as a full-time case manager, property manager and a health clinic (in partnership with Optimus Health Care) that allows residents to receive critical medical care right where they live! The building, which we own and operate in partnership with Charter Oak Communities, also have a stunning roof deck that encourages residents to spend time outdoors. Its location adjacent to our headquarters also means residents have access to the wide array of services we offer there, including workforce education, employment services and much more. Summer Place residents are also encouraged to volunteer in these programs, creating a “Senior Corps” of active residents.



***Home again!
Move in Day for Bruce***



72 Franklin – ETA 12-15 months!

72 FRANKLIN STREET: Those of you who have visited Inspirica know that we are never complacent. With Summer Place completed, we turned our attention to our next big initiative: a much larger deeply affordable housing project, located at 72 Franklin Street in the heart of downtown Stamford. When completed, the building will house 53 deeply affordable apartments, including 26 studios for individuals, 17 two-

bedroom units for families and 10 3-bedroom units for families (approximately 125 people in total). It will further include an Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center/School with six classrooms that will increase the number of publicly funded slots for children ages 0-3 available in Stamford 150%, from 32 to 80.

Partners: We believe in collaboration. We're pleased to be developing 72 Franklin Street with a great partner, the Garden Homes Fund. We are also pleased to have Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County as the anchor tenant in the ECE Center, where it will pay less than 50% of the market rental rate. Other partners without whom this project would not be possible include: Mayor David Martin and the City of Stamford; RMS Companies, First Congregational Church of Greenwich, and First County Bank Foundation. In addition to creating a new concept for housing and possibly making Stamford the first major city in the nation to end family homelessness, 72 Franklin is a tri-sector initiative that shows what can happen when the not-for-profit sector, government and private sector get together and decide to solve a problem!



*It takes a village.
Some of our friends and partners*

THE SMALL THINGS!

Many of you tell us throughout the year that Inspirica is an amazing organization. We appreciate the sentiment. One of the things that makes us special is actually many things – that is, the many small things we do that ultimately define us. If it's true that our lives are made up of small moments that collectively tell a story, the same is true of an organization. Take a look at some of the small things we did throughout 2017 – things you might not know about.

Thanksgiving Giveaway

Homelessness is increasingly driven not by mental illness or substance abuse, but economics. People simply can't make ends meet. Not only does this mean they don't have enough money for rent, but far too often they don't have enough money for food. They can no longer afford things they used to take for granted such as a family meal on Thanksgiving. To make sure that's not the case, this year we once again gave away 850 turkeys and baskets to residents of Stamford's South End on Thanksgiving. The line formed at 7:00am and went on for hours. Each family received a frozen turkey and a basket filled with all the fixins: potatoes, stuffing, gravy, greens, cranberry, cookies, pumpkin pie and much more.



Warming Center



The increasing numbers of people who are homeless in our community present us with an especially difficult challenge in winter. When the temperature drops to life-threatening levels, they have nowhere to turn . . . and we have nowhere to put them; our shelters are 100% full. To solve the problem, we opened the area's only Overnight Warming Center. Each person receives a hot dinner, a hot shower, a bed, and breakfast the next morning. Equally important, we begin to help them access services that lead to them securing shelter and eventually permanent housing.

Holiday Gift Collection

When you don't have money for rent or food, you certainly don't have money to buy presents for your children. It's an awful feeling. Parents feel inadequate and children feel left out or even neglected. Once again, Inspirica is here to help. Our Holiday Gift Collection is now in its 28th year. This year, 3,000 underprivileged children from over 30 organizations throughout Fairfield County will have the holiday they hoped for. Each child will receive two gifts that he/she specifically requested (one educational, one fun) plus a book. All gifts are wrapped and will be delivered to the parents to give to their children over the holidays! That's 6,000 toys, 3,000 books, countless smiles, and memories for a lifetime!



Birthday Bash



Imagine being a child who has no home. Imagine living in a shelter with strange families. Now imagine having your birthday . . . but no birthday party (because you don't have a home to have it in). It shouldn't happen to any child. And at Inspirica it doesn't. When the world seems darkest, we celebrate the joy of life. Every month we hold a big birthday bash for the children who had birthdays – cake, ice cream, presents . . . the works! You wouldn't know that the children celebrating their birthdays were homeless from the smiles on their faces!

Summer Fun

For children, life is all about summer – camps, beach, and carefree days. The homeless children we serve deserve the same. This past summer we sent 45 kids to summer camp, including sleepaway camp. They came back transformed and full of confidence and wonder. They learned to swim, sail, build a bonfire, hike and much more. With the help of volunteers we also made sure they had some time playing in the sand at the beach. Our day at the beach is always followed by the quietest night of the year: parents and children sound asleep – exhausted . . . and happy.



Spring Break

You don't think of it, but spring break is often a difficult time for our children. School is out and their non-homeless friends are off having fun, but our kids have nowhere to go. That's no longer the case. For the third year in a row, we sent our children to Spring Camp at Camp Seton (the Boy Scouts camp in Greenwich). They met strange animals, learned about nature, went hiking, had cookouts . . . and, most important, ate "S'mores" (roasted marshmallows and melted Hershey chocolate bars sandwiched between two graham crackers). More smiles, but let's just say it wasn't the quietest night of the year thanks to the sugar rush.



Inspirica's mission is to house people as quickly as possible. We never lose sight of this. But we also know that small, kind acts (only a few of which we've highlighted here) make the trauma of the homeless a little less severe. An intolerable situation becomes bearable. Good memories – lifetime memories – can be made even in the darkest moments. THANK YOU to the many volunteers who help us do the small things that mean so much to the people we serve.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

We're always looking for ways to keep in touch.
Please check our website as well as our social media.



Website: <https://www.inspiricact.org>

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

KERI: FINDING HAPPINESS & HOME

Keri is a single mother of Patrick, age 4. She grew up in a rough neighborhood, lacked a high school degree, and had ongoing issues with authority. Unemployed and moving from one bad situation to the next, her future was not headed in a positive direction.

“I felt like I was sinking”... Keri

Helping Keri wasn't easy. She was angry and filled with a lifetime of self-doubt. After weeks of counseling she began to challenge herself. She enrolled in our Jumpstart Career Program, showing particular interest in our **Home Health Aide Vocational Training Program**. By the time she completed the 12-course curriculum, you could scarcely recognize the person who had come to us dejected and broken.

The same was true for Patrick. We enrolled him in our **Early Childhood & Parenting Program** where he received the critical early childhood development and pre-literacy skills necessary for children his age. The issues that plagued Keri in her early development will not afflict Patrick, allowing him to *break the cycle of homelessness*.

Keri is now a full-time Home Health Aide. She and Patrick are searching for a home. Because of Inspirica, we were able to make an everlasting change in their lives and Patrick and Keri will soon be home.

***We are grateful to you for your support. Together, we make a difference!
Please let us know if you are able to visit. This report pales in comparison to
witnessing firsthand the impact you have on the people we serve.***

Jason Shaplen, Chief Executive Officer
E-Mail: jshaplen@inspirica.org Phone: 203.388.0125

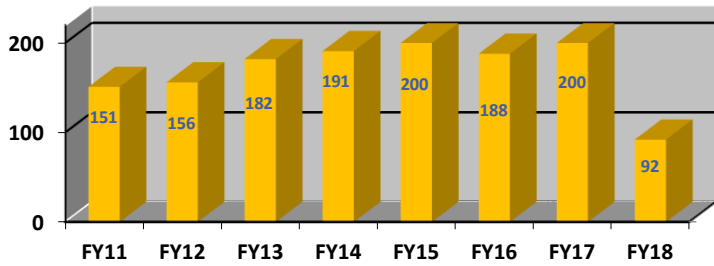


RESULTS

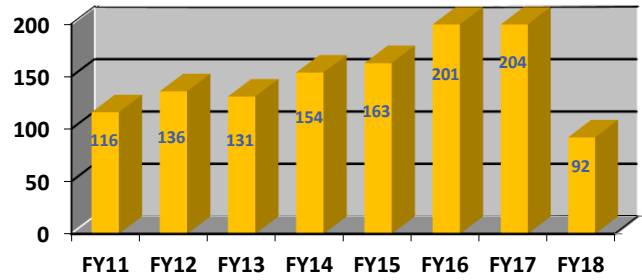
HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Over the Past 7 Years, 5 Months (through 11/30/17)

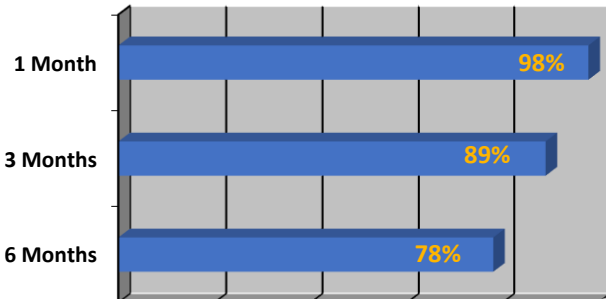
1,360 Job Placements



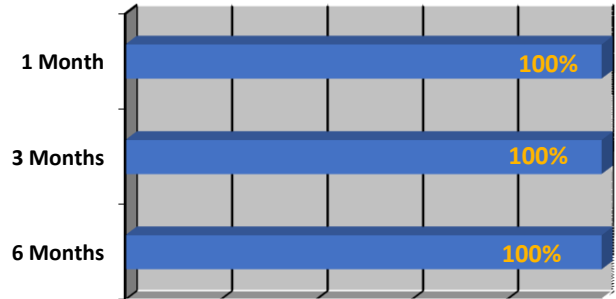
1,197 Housing Placements



Job Retention Rate



Housing Retention Rate



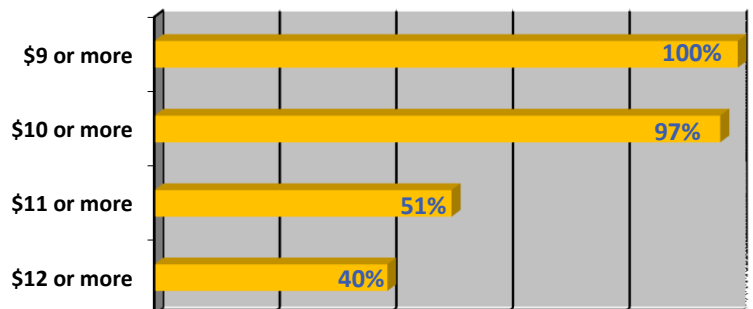
AVG STARTING WAGE (FY18 to date)

\$12.63/hr
25% above minimum wage

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Matriculation to next grade level: 99%
Average Grade: B-

Starting Wage



INSPIRICA'S PROGRAMS

RESIDENTIAL

EMERGENCY SHELTER

- Emergency Shelter for Single Women – 25 beds
- Emergency Shelter for Families – 42 beds

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- Transitional Housing for Families – 63 beds
- Gilead House – 16 beds

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

- Colony Apartments – 29 beds
- Atlantic Park Apartments – 27 beds
- Metcalf House – 10 beds
- Rose Park Apartments – 6 beds
- McKinney House – 15 beds

DEEPLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 24 Woodland Place – 18 beds
- 26 Woodland Place – 11 beds
- 992 Summer Street – 48 beds (forthcoming)
- 72 Franklin Street – 125 beds (forthcoming)

RAPID REHOUSING

- Short- and long-term subsidies to rapidly rehouse individuals and families

SUPPORT SERVICES

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- Foundational Support
- Educational Support
- Psychological/Developmental Support
- After-school Youth Center

EARLY CHILDHOOD & PARENTING PROGRAM

- Infant/Toddler foundational skills/support
- Pre-K foundational skills/support
- Parenting education/support

JUMPSTART CAREER PROGRAM

- **Jumpstart Vocational Training**
 - Home Health Aide certification
- **Jumpstart Education**
 - 13 weeks of workforce education
- **Jumpstart Employment Agency**

HOUSING PLACEMENT

JOB & HOUSING RETENTION

HEALTH CARE (in partnership with Optimus)

- *Clinic @ Woodland*
- *Clinic @ Summer Place*

CASE MANAGEMENT

COUNSELING