

FY 2021
2022 **YEAR IN REVIEW**



Ripple Community Inc.
We're in the social fabric business

Letter from the Director

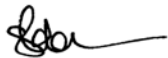
I was walking downtown a few weeks ago when I saw Mike, one of our longtime community members. "Well, hello, Sherri!" he said, in his usual chipper tone. We spent a few minutes catching up, and I asked if we would see him at RCI that afternoon. "Oh yes!" he said. "I just feel really happy there. I like all the people. I like all the staff. It's a safe place for me, and there are people I can relate to. It's just a really good place."

In her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer reminds us that all gifts are multiplied in relationship. In our work at RCI, we have the profound privilege of living that truth every day. It's a gift to provide care and comfort at our Community Building Center for our friends who are unsheltered, and to provide homes through our RCI Village housing program for our neighbors who have long struggled without one. It's how we come to recognize the joy of knowing Mike as a friend and a neighbor.

Life is challenging for our community members, in ways that many of us struggle to imagine. But even in difficult circumstances, life can be lined with goodness. As you read this report, I hope you see that goodness in the form of relationship, belonging, purpose, and connection—all of which abound here.

Thank you for your generous care and support, which is what makes all of this possible! We are so glad you are part of our RCI community.

With gratitude,



SHERRI BROKOPP BINDER, PHD
Executive Director



"I keep watching the clock until it's time to come over to Ripple. It just makes me feel good to come over here."

~ RCI Community Member

Community Building Center

"We need places like this. I was homeless 3 or 4 years ago when someone told me about Ripple. It's a great place."

~ RCI Community Member

The Community Building Center (CBC) is a day center that primarily serves our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness or who are living at the margins. Every day, between 40 to 70 adults come to the center and find resources, a good meal, a place to rest, friendship, and a supportive community.

While our community members will always encounter difficult situations, we are well equipped to provide care, attention, and encouragement. We strive to make every person who comes to the CBC feel welcome and cared for, whether they are a new or a long-term member of the RCI community. We know we are on the right path by the faces and responses of our community members.

Community Center Volunteer Spotlight

Emily's Story



Graduating college during the pandemic was definitely a challenge. I experienced a lack of human connection and didn't know how others were navigating these difficult times. When the world started to feel a little safer, I decided to get involved in Allentown's community, but I had no idea where to begin.

At the time, a friend from high school was interning as an art therapist at RCI. She would post updates about what members were working on and I wanted to learn more right away. I went to school for art, and wanted to get involved with anything that centered around art and helping others. We set up a time for me to take a tour of Community Building Center and I started regularly volunteering from then on.

This past year, I've gotten to know our community members and all the resources Allentown has to offer. I used to be oblivious to what resources were out there and the severity of people's needs. I have learned so much in my small amount of time here and most of what I learned is through spending time with our members and understanding that everyone just wants to be seen and safe. **That's exactly the purpose of RCI in my eyes. Yes, we provide health services and other necessities of survival, but creating a safe space for people to be seen and heard is what allows people to truly thrive and not just survive.**

I'm so grateful to have found my place here at RCI, and I never thought volunteering a few times a month would influence not only a career change, but my perspective as well. I am now doing an AmeriCorps service year here and this community will always be the stepping stone in my journey.

The Service Hub

In 2019, we expanded the community center and established the Service Hub. At the time, our community members were struggling to access essential services at multiple locations. Our goal was to make these services more accessible to our community members. Now, our partners provide a wide array of in-house services for RCI community members and residents. We are always working to expand our network of partners and activities.

We love our Service Hub Partners!

Allentown The Center
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
Cedar Crest College Art Therapy Program
Change on Hamilton
Dough-2-Door
Lehigh County Mental Health Program
Moravian University

Muhlenberg College
Suddenly Samantha Salon
St. Luke's Parish Nursing Program
Valley Health Partners Street Medicine & Mobile Harm Reduction Clinic
Valley Against Sex Trafficking
Valley Youth House Synergy Project

Clockwise from top: (1) Chair yoga in our Service Hub, led by students from Muhlenberg College; (2) Restorative practices training with our service partners; (3) Narcan training led by Valley Health Partners Street Medicine



RCI Village Housing Program

The RCI Village housing program provides safe, healthy, deeply affordable housing for our neighbors who have struggled with homelessness or housing instability. Beyond housing, the RCI Village gives our residents an opportunity to become part of a community where they can feel supported, put down roots, and build a true home for themselves and their families.

"Heather and I are blessed, we connected with RCI. They have helped us when we were at our lowest point, and now the girls feel safe and secure."



Clockwise from top: (1) RCI Village residents enjoy a summer potluck meal in West Park; (2) Two of our young residents learn a new game; (3) Volunteers from City Center clean an apartment so it is ready for a new resident.



The RCI Village is a proven model for helping individuals and families permanently exit harmful cycles of homelessness and housing instability. In just over four years, this program has grown to serve more than 30 of our most vulnerable neighbors, bringing about true and lasting change in their lives and the community. We are working diligently to expand this program to serve more of our neighbors whose options in the current housing market are extremely limited. As a mission-focused organization, RCI is well positioned to help address Allentown's complex housing challenges by maintaining a stock of high-quality, deeply affordable housing.

Place matters!

RCI is proud to be part of the **Franklin Park Housing and Neighborhood Engagement Groups**, which are part of a three-pronged initiative to improve health and well-being for our neighbors in and around Franklin Park. Convened by the Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health, partners include: Enterprise Community Partners, The Lupton Center, North Penn Legal Services, the City of Allentown, Community Services for Children, The Century Promise, Cohesion Network, St. Stephen's Outreach Center, Ripple Church, and Valley Health Partners.



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STAFF

- Sherri Brokopp Binder, PhD, Executive Director
- Blake Henry, RCI Village Housing Director
- Natalie Flores, Community Building Center Director
- Emily Snyder, Community & Housing Services Coordinator
- Danilo Sanchez, Interfaith Community Chaplain
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RCI Village Properties Board

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THANK YOU

to our foundation, faith community, corporate, & local government supporters

\$110,000+

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Up to \$50,000

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Up to \$20,000

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City Center Allentown
City of Allentown
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Lehigh Valley Community Foundation CORE Fellowship Program

Up to \$5,000

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Up to \$2,500

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Up to \$1,500

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
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Up to \$500

DBA Mountain Wood Company
Doylestown Mennonite Church
MMS Advancement Associates
Northwestern Elementary Staff Activity Fund
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Wellspring Church of Skippack
Working Dog Press

THANK YOU

to our individual donors

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Melissa Weinstein & Samantha Carney
Hilary Whitman

No power on this earth can destroy the thirst for human dignity.

NELSON MANDELA

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY



"I love you guys. I can't thank you enough for what you've done for my family."



"You're a person when you come in here. You're not a statistic. These folks care. Sometimes when I come over here. I have a problem or something. Within five minutes. I'm laughing and carrying on, just like everybody else."

~ RCI Community Member

Jan's Story

Community Member Spotlight - Jan reflects on growing up in Allentown



We lived on the south side of Chew, at 15th. My mother fell down the steps, walked over to the hospital, and had me six weeks early. And the doctor, his own daughter had been born but something happened to her. So he was very careful with me. And I kept going to the same doctor on 17th Street, and every time I did I got one of those root beer lollipops. And I'd say, 'Why am I going to the doctor so much, mom? I'm healthy, aren't I?' He was just so worried about me. He called me Miss Jan. And I went in when I was 11 years old, to get the root of a tooth taken out so I could start braces, he sees me and he says, 'What are you doin' here, Miss Jan?' And I go, 'I'm just having fun.' And he says, 'You're having an operation in the morning.' So, he followed me even when I was in the hospital at 11 years old.

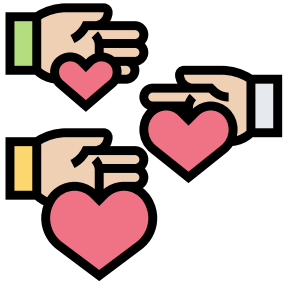
Community Member Spotlight - Charles shares about the meaning of community

Ripple has been there for me ever since they opened. Every time I was in the hospital, someone from Ripple came to visit me multiple times. Not only did they help me every step of the way to getting our apartment, but they are also still helping me after the fact, like helping me handle a certain situation that was causing me a lot of stress. They also give me a space to blow off steam by joking around with people and making them laugh.

Back when I was homeless, I avoided talking to people and had a bad attitude. Even when I showed no interest in speaking with people, Pastor Ben always checked in on me and asked how I was doing. They always give that kind heart. It's the kindness that they give to the people here. Lisa and I were just talking about that recently, that we are so lucky and blessed for Ripple's help in all of this. It just so happens that the day we moved into our apartment, was the day Lisa's granddaughter was born. That's why I call her Princess, she's my lucky piece. I tell her that because of her, we have a place for her to come visit.

Charles' Story





FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FY 2021-22

We are grateful to our many community supporters, whose generous contributions have allowed us to grow steadily over the past seven years while maintaining a state of good financial health. As our programs grow and expand, we are better able to fulfill our mission and serve our community.

Our funding comes primarily from private sources, including foundations (52%), individual donors (20%), businesses and corporate donors (15%), and churches and faith communities (8%). This year, we received additional pandemic-specific support from local government sources (5%) including the City of Allentown and the County of Lehigh.

In 2020, we established RCI Village Properties, a 501(c)(3) supporting organization, to support our work in expanding the RCI Village housing program. In 2021-22, RCI Village Properties received capital contributions in the amount of \$239,989.

RCI is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and with the Pennsylvania Department of State Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations (Certificate of Registration No. 106166). The annual financial reviews for both RCI and RCI Village Properties are conducted by Campbell, Rappold, & Yurasits, LLC, a certified public accounting firm.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| RCI REVENUES | \$443,303 |
| RCI EXPENSES | \$427,256 |
| RCI VILLAGE PROPERTIES CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS | \$239,989 |

RCI BY THE NUMBERS

COMMUNITY BUILDING CENTER

40-70

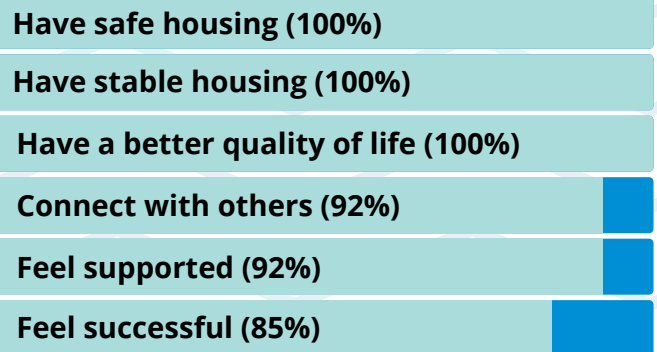
COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED DAILY

88%

OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE ACCESSED THE SERVICE HUB

RCI VILLAGE

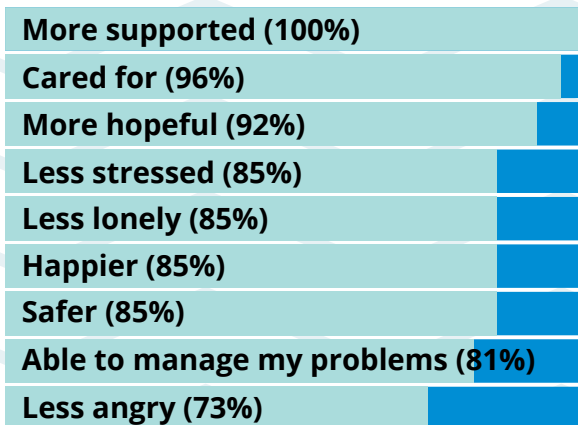
The RCI Village program helps me:



95%

of residents can name at least 3 neighbors, which is a robust indicator of social capital.

Coming to RCI helps me feel:



The RCI Village has grown to 17 apartments



33
RESIDENTS

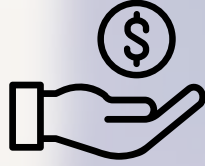
including individuals and families

Ways to Get Involved



"This is exactly what I've been looking for. It feels like home."

~ RCI Village Resident



Make a financial contribution



Purchase items from our Needs List



To donate, visit our website at www.RippleCommunityInc.org



Donate to the Adopt-an-Apartment program



Volunteer Your time

Ripple Community Inc.
1335 W. Linden Street
Allentown, PA 18102
www.RippleCommunityInc.org



1335 W Linden St.
Allentown, PA 18102

Thank you for being part of our community!