



Building Foundations for Life

# Our Families Thrive

FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*It was hard to imagine a year ago the devastation that COVID-19 would wreak on families, our state, and our nation.*

Saranam is a stronger organization at the end of 2020 than we have ever been, not just despite the challenges of COVID-19, but also because of them. The investments and insights we have gained by pivoting the delivery of our mission have helped us not only to survive the pandemic, but also have positioned us to thrive in this new world.

Throughout the pandemic, the priority of Saranam has been to ensure the safety and stability of our families served. When the virus took hold, we rapidly shifted all of our operations to an online format so we could continue providing the high-quality education, resources, and care our families have relied on for seventeen years. This change required a strategic investment of time and resources into technology, and I am excited not only for our success but for the possibilities these investments open for us going forward.

Our biggest asset has always been our people. I am so proud of the ingenuity our staff and volunteers have shown in order to ensure that families don't lose ground. Both adults and children have maintained remote education. We continue to foster a close-knit online community, accentuated by creative communal projects like gardening and collaborative book writing.

Our ability to pivot our mission delivery quickly and secure financial support meant that we were able to bring in ten new families as originally planned. These families faced the terrifying realities of homelessness amid a surging pandemic and are now on a path to success and security.

The changes we made flipped our perspective. Through significant organizational evaluation, we have emerged from 2020 more aware of our needs and see new possibilities that will make us more effective and adaptive in the future. For example:

- Expanded online education options give our parents more flexibility;
- We see that community can be forged in the future between the two sites with online options;

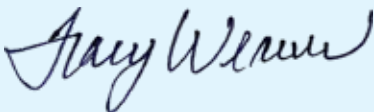
- Investment in technology allows families to bridge the cavernous socio-economic digital divide and enter the increasingly technological workforce better prepared;
- Creating opportunities to get involved engages a broader network of supporters, both within and outside the local community.

We have seen just how close to the brink of ruin many families are, and it reinforced how important it is, not just to end homelessness but to address poverty. Insights gained from our continued work between Saranam and the UNM Evaluation Lab will help assess our outcomes and create new opportunities for asset building and financial management for our alumni. Already, families have saved thousands of dollars towards houses, cars, and college funds. With challenges stacked against families higher than ever, we will continue to be nimble and offer what is needed to build long-term stability and growth.

The need for our program has never been greater and we are now in a stronger, more efficient position to grow. We took a huge step toward doubling capacity this year when Saranam closed on a 3.5-acre property on Albuquerque's west side. We are now poised to lead a successful capital campaign to build our second campus and are confident that we will break ground in 2022.

We could not have made it through this year without you. Community has always been the glue that binds us, and we are so grateful for your strength and devotion and look forward to a continued partnership.


Thank you,



Tracy Weaver  
Executive Director

*The need for  
our program  
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## Tracy Weaver & Dr. Cynthia Arndell Presented at the Beyond Housing Conference in New York City

### **Impacting Social Determinants of Health with Homeless Populations Through Innovations in Health Professions Education: A Unique Partnership between Saranam, a 2Gen Service Organization, and the University of New Mexico Medical School**



The Institute on Children, Poverty and Homelessness is dedicated to bringing family and child homelessness into focus through research, policy briefs, and interactive data tools. ICPH's publications inform government officials, policymakers, advocates, academics, and service providers from across the country to promote a robust, evidence-based dialogue on family and child homelessness.



In January 2020, Executive Director, Tracy Weaver and Dr. Cynthia Arndell presented at the Institute on Children, Poverty and Homelessness Beyond Housing Conference in New York City. For several years, Saranam partnered with Dr. Arndell and the UNM Medical School around training about

Social Determinants of Health. As Dr. Arndell developed curriculum for medical students, she provided opportunities to learn directly from families and people experiencing homelessness and their experiences with the health care system. Additionally, Saranam families also learned how health, income, and other socio-economic factors are interrelated as they began their journey to increase their employability/socio-economic, health, and family outcomes while at Saranam.

Board Chair Linda Weil, Director of Family Services Jennifer Mullen, and Director of Continuous Improvement Ellen Shepherd attended the conference to support and learn from the many other conference workshop options. The team had a great time but more importantly brought back a lot to think and talk about!



# Laura's Story



**Laura has always enjoyed taking care of other people, but her journey from homelessness has also taught her to take care of herself.**

When Laura came to New Mexico she had no idea what her next step would be. An unhealthy relationship forced her to uproot her family quickly from their Colorado home, but, with no support available in either state, she turned to a shelter.

Though the shelter was reliable, it wasn't an ideal environment for her two young children. A generous member of her local church paid for her to stay in a hotel until a longer-term solution could be found, but before she moved, Laura applied to Saranam.

Laura was thrilled when she was accepted into the program but had lingering trepidations about her capabilities. She wasn't raised with the knowledge of what prerequisites were, how to sign up for assistance, or how to find the right daycare for her kids. The flurry of planning was overwhelming.

**The supportive community and guidance from Saranam staff, she says, made all the difference. "You weren't alone. People were doing it WITH you."**

The support gave her the breathing room to make another critical change – to invest in self-care. She noticed that the short, solo walk from her apartment to the classroom quickly became her favorite time of day. The quiet time allowed her to gather her thoughts and helped her handle the stress of what was in front of her. Now she makes that time a priority.

"I'm in a better relationship with myself now. I take "me" time everyday so I am able to be the best mom I can be and really put my best self into my goals."

Her improved mindset has also given her new-found confidence and energy to pursue her passion. As a child of a chronically ill parent, she has always wanted to work in healthcare and recently received her certified nursing assistant (CNA) license. She plans to earn her Patient Care Technician certificate and work part-time while continuing in school to become a nurse.

**Her accomplishments, she says, have only inspired her to reach higher.**

"I have always set really high goals –I wanted housing, I wanted my certificates –but I didn't think I could do it. I HAVE. My goals haven't changed (since being in the program) – they've only grown."

Her kids, who had never had a stable home for more than ten months before Saranam, have blossomed as well. Having consistent school and friends has opened them up and allowed them to enjoy the dancing and singing that should characterize a young child's life.

Laura continues to stay connected to the community, even after she and her family moved to a large townhome ahead of schedule. She and her kids are thriving with the two newest members of their family – two very well-loved cats.



# Sheila's Story



**After years of being blown around by the forces around her, Sheila is ready to start making her own path.**

Sheila is from a small, rural town in Arizona. It is hours away from the nearest Walmart, but it was her anchor, a nest for her dreams. She attended college and received her dental assistant certification, but a volatile marriage derailed the next leg of her journey.

Throughout her marriage, even small things would trigger an extreme response from her husband. He constantly berated her and often threatened to kick her out of the house. She and her five kids spent many years feeling like they were constantly walking on eggshells. "I didn't really feel like I had a home."

She wanted more. But to move out of the house she needed to move up the income ladder, and that meant increasing her education. She was accepted into PIMA's dental hygienist program and was surprised when her husband offered to take care of their kids while she studied. She reluctantly agreed and moved with him to Albuquerque.

Unfortunately, the emotional abuse continued, and her housing security remained subject to her husband's whims. She spent her days working hard at school and her nights afraid that the door would be closed on her. She was stuck. With a global pandemic in full swing and no support system, moving out would either mean leaving school or breaking up her family. And as miserable as she was, leaving her kids wasn't an option.

Her hand was forced when an incident made their home unsafe and she had to do the thing that often takes the most courage – she asked for help.

She entered a shelter while her kids stayed out of state, where the First Nations Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) referred her to Saranam. She thought it was a long shot but knew this was a way to keep her family together and

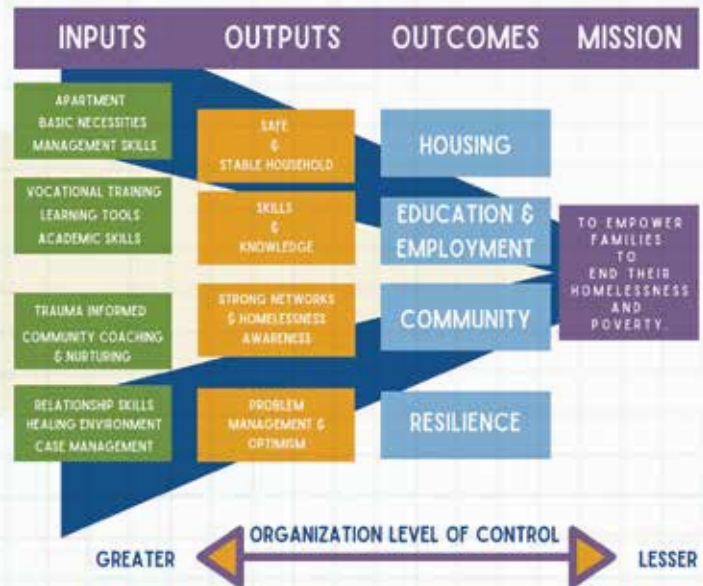


continue to work on her goals. "I have no luck in life. I felt sure they wouldn't see anything great in us and wouldn't pick us." She was shocked when they were selected.

One year into the program, Sheila has found a place where she is truly stable. "We feel a lot more security. We don't feel like our home is threatened, like we're not allowed in our own place."

# LOGIC MODEL

## Logical Framework



Sheila's drive has kept her on track. Despite the upheaval of 2020, she has completed her Dental Hygiene degree and plans to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Public Health. The combination, she says, will finally enable her to design her own path.

Her kids are thriving in their new home. In a year of so many changes, a consistent place to learn and a welcoming community has helped them feel anchored. They are happiest now when they get a chance to unplug and connect with one another outdoors.

Sheila feels the certainty comforting as well and plans to stay in New Mexico when she graduates. She's finally found a place, and a path, that she can call her own.

This year, with support from the Carl C. Anderson Sr. and Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation, Saranam participated in the UNM Evaluation Lab. In the first year of this three year project, we developed a logic model and mapped our alumni survey in order to gauge our long-term impact on families' outcomes and stability.

A logic model is a road map of the relationships between our inputs/activities and outcomes/impacts. This model helps us assess, evaluate, and validate that the activities we are doing are affecting positive outcomes for our families, both at exit and in the long term.

A surprise awareness we had is that in addition to ending poverty and homelessness through HOUSING, EDUCATION and COMMUNITY, we found that our families are more RESILIENT overall after going through our program.



# Saranam Overview

## VISION

To transform the lives of homeless families.

## MISSION

To empower families to end their homelessness and poverty through housing, education, and supportive communities.

## SARANAM'S 3 STEPS TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY FOR FAMILIES

1

Housing Ends Homelessness

2

Education Brings Employment Opportunities

3

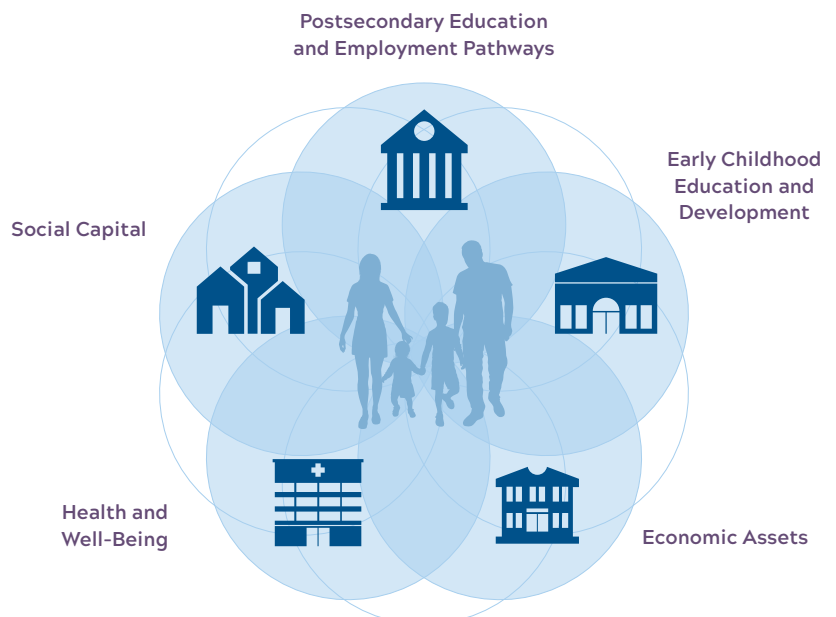
Community Builds Connection

Saranam, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is an innovative two-generational program that addresses the significant underlying causes of homelessness—lack of support systems and community, poverty, despair and isolation. Saranam provides families with safe housing, intensive case management, a supportive community, and a pathway forward to self-sufficiency through education. With basic living needs provided for up to two years, families can focus their efforts on education, vocational development, and acquiring life skills for independent living.

Additionally, Saranam is committed to a new way of looking at generational poverty. A two-generational approach is an anti-poverty initiative that provides services for both children and their parents. This approach helps families get what they need to create a legacy of economic stability and overall well-being that passes from one generation to the next. This approach recognizes that families come in all different shapes and sizes and that families define themselves.

## 5 KEY COMPONENTS OF THE TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

From the Aspen Institute





The importance that a parent's education, economic stability, and overall health has on a child's trajectory is well documented. Likewise, children's education and healthy development inspire and encourage parents to set the entire family on a more secure path.

We work from and towards the needs of both the parent and the child, using research, education, and personal experience to determine what to include, change, or reform in our program. We have a 76% success rate of families successfully exiting the program into permanent, safe, stable living situations, where they can support themselves. The life skills we provide ensure that families can maintain and sustain these outcomes. The 76% of families who exit successfully do so by earning income through employment or scholarship and using it to provide for their housing, utilities, and basic living supplies. Additionally, we provide support, programming, and opportunities for increased success and building assets for our alumni.

## SERVICES PROVIDED



### HOUSING

furnished apartment  
transportation assistance  
household supplies  
phone and internet service  
diapers  
case management



### EDUCATION

GED prep  
vocational training  
college  
life skills  
financial literacy  
children's literacy  
child care  
laptops



### COMMUNITY

cohort model  
alumni support  
evening activities  
volunteering  
community accountability  
family center  
playground  
community gardens  
resources

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$9,600**

Annual increase  
in earning potential  
with high school/GED

**\$3,000**

Annual increase  
in earning potential with  
some college – no degree

**\$6,200**

Annual increase  
in earning potential with  
Associate's degree

**\$23,800**

Annual increase  
in earning potential with  
Bachelor's degree

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Study, 2015. Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

**\$42,700\***

Estimated annual cost  
to city of Albuquerque per homeless  
person

**\$11,522**

Annual cost for housing and  
education for a Saranam individual

**\$37,792**

Annual cost for housing and  
education for a Saranam family

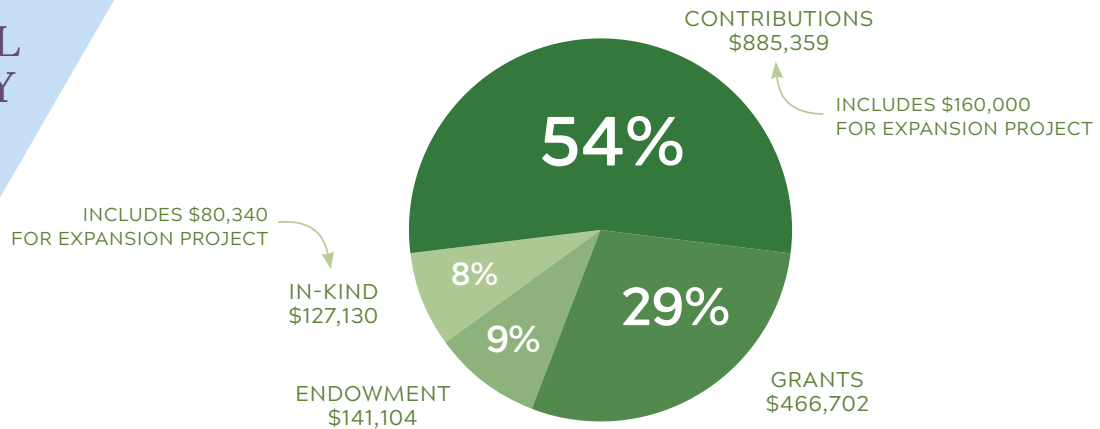
Source: 2015 Cost analysis study by UNM Anderson School of Management Small Business Institute Graduate Students.

\*Albuquerque Point in Time Count 2019. Includes cost of medical, jail, and emergency shelters.

For families with an annual  
income of \$25,000 or less who  
also have young children,  
**a \$3,000 difference**  
in parents' income when their child  
is young is associated with  
**a 17% increase**  
in the child's future earnings.

Source: The Aspen Institute

## 2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY



TOTAL REVENUES **\$1,602,657**

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$1,050,498**

AVERAGE COST  
PER FAMILY  
**\$37,792**

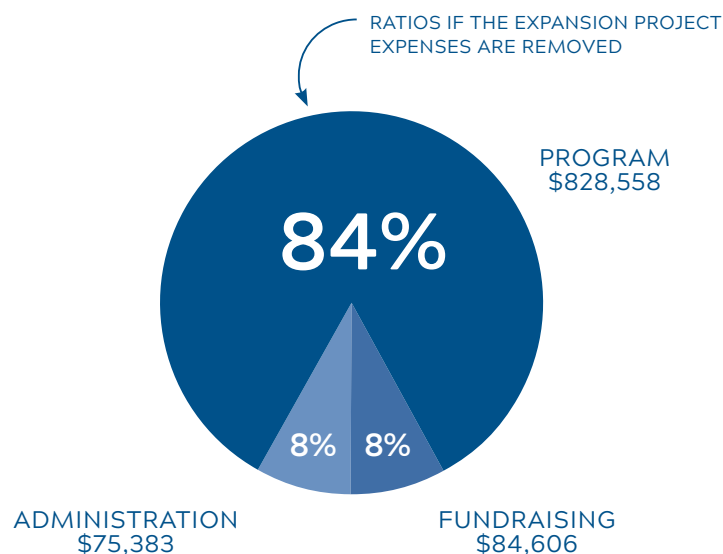
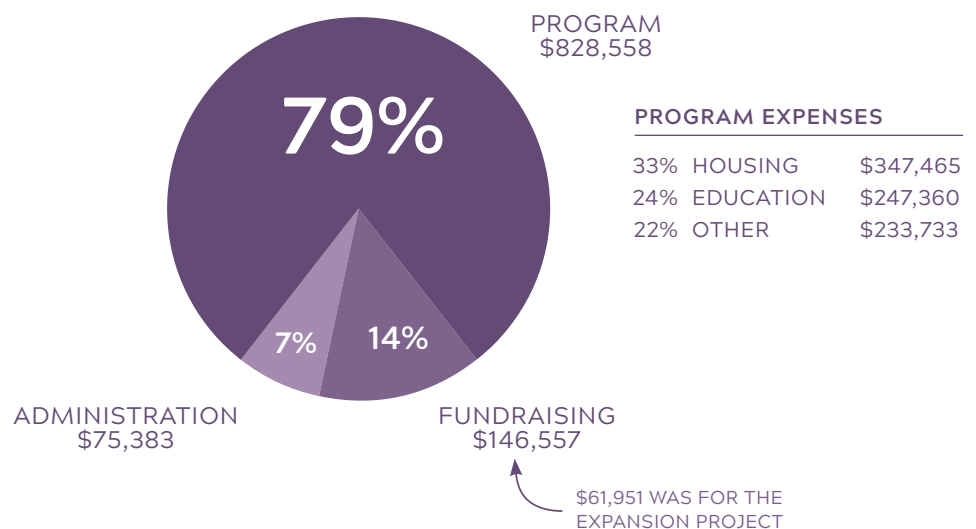
AVERAGE COST  
PER PERSON  
**\$11,522**

### HOUSING COSTS INCLUDE

Rent  
Apartment supplies  
Stocked kitchen/pantry  
Personal hygiene supplies  
Cash allowance  
Transportation  
Background checks  
Drug tests  
Telephones and utilities  
Internet

### EDUCATION COSTS INCLUDE

Contracts for instructors  
Fees and supplies for classes  
Scholarships for tuition, fees, and books  
Computers  
Child care  
Children's programming



OUR ENDOWMENT  
COVERED 96%  
OF FUNDRAISING  
EXPENSES

# 2020 AT A GLANCE

Saranam has served 142 homeless families, including 298 children and 164 adults, during our seventeen years in operation. Families successfully exit the Saranam program having met three or more of our measures of success, indicating that they are able to be fully self-sufficient. This includes the ability to pay for their housing, utilities, and other living expenses.

MORE THAN  
**85%**  
SUCCESS RATE  
IN 2020



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- 25 families served
- 10 new families entered the program
- 28 Adults
- 54 Children
- 26 under the age of 6



## DEGREES/CERTIFICATES EARNED

- 1 GED
- 4 Nursing Assistant certificates
- 2 passed National Certified Nursing Assistant exam
- 2 Patient Care Technician certificates
- 1 Dental Assistant certificate
- 1 passed National Certified Dental Assistant exam



## COURSES OF STUDY IN PROGRESS

- Bachelor of Science or Arts:
  - Criminal Justice, Psychology
- Associate of Arts or Science Degrees:
  - Business Administration
  - Liberal Arts
  - Nursing
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
- Certificates:
  - Accounting, Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician

**7**  
FAMILIES  
EXITED

**6**  
ACHIEVED 3  
OR MORE  
MEASURES OF  
SUCCESS

## HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

**1**

Family moved into  
STABLE HOUSING

**2**

Adult members significantly  
improved their level  
of EDUCATION

**3**

Adult members  
are EMPLOYED

**4**

Adult members have  
significantly improved their  
ABILITY TO MANAGE LIFE

**5**

Parents improved their  
PARENTING SKILLS

**6**

Adult members have  
ADDRESSED MAJOR BARRIERS  
to their family stability

## STEP 1

# Homelessness Ends With a Home



Every day parents experiencing homelessness must focus on and plan for where their children will sleep that night, how to keep them safe, and how to get them fed. Because they are often on the move and usually lack access to a kitchen, feeding their children means relying on food that does not need to be refrigerated or cooked. The family members experience high levels of stress and often feel unsafe and vulnerable. This is why we start with housing.



Each family is instantly safe. They have control over their immediate environment. They choose who enters their space. They no longer have to worry if their children will be safe while sleeping. They have a stocked refrigerator and working stove — and all the tools they need to cook nutritious meals. They have access to quality schools and childcare, all within walking distance.



Once these basic needs are provided, the adults and children in Saranam can begin to relax. They have the time and energy to focus on themselves: their health, their education, their futures.

Beginning on their very first day, they have a community of families surrounding them. They have other adults to talk to, they watch out for each other's children, and they rely on each other for support.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- » Even with the pandemic shutdown restrictions this summer, we were able to safely engage **more than 78 Saranam volunteers that worked 804 hours preparing apartments for our 10 newly arriving families.**
- » **Furniture, household basics and decor were collected throughout the year** according to COVID-safe guidelines and stored in our warehouse for volunteer decorators to “shop” for the items needed for each apartment.
- » **Volunteer decorators met remotely via Zoom** to plan and wore masks and practiced social distancing during the several weeks spent setting up the bedrooms, kitchen, bathrooms, and living room in each apartment. They added personal touches that transformed each apartment into a home.
- » **Many people and groups provide baskets** of toiletries, paper goods, infant/toddler items, cleaning supplies and first aid kits to stock each apartment.
- » The day before the new families moved in, the **volunteers shopped for groceries online and utilized curbside pick-up to stock the families’ refrigerators and pantries.**
- » **Apartments are customized for each family** with a minimum of 2 beds with bedside tables, 2 dressers, toys, a couch and coffee table, kitchen table, dishes, small appliances (coffee maker, crock-pot, etc.), linens, a desk and chair, decorations, and a TV.
- » **Saranam families take their whole house of furnishings with them when they leave!**





# MY REFUGE STORY

My favorite place to be is not common to most people, but it has the most meaning to me in my life right now. If I could be anywhere at any given time, I would want to be in my apartment. For my family and me, it represents stability, security, and hope. My family earned this apartment from Saranam. My apartment is a two-bedroom and one-bath. It may not be much, but, for two years it belongs to us. It's our home.

My boyfriend and I come from a background of homelessness. We have gone through many things nobody should have to go through. Together, we have three children and because of obstacles in our way, they have been on this continuing journey of homelessness with us. Last year, my boyfriend and I decided we were tired of this life. Our children deserve a better future.

Saranam was our beginning to a new life. When we moved into our apartment, the feeling of having our own space to call home was refreshing. The first thing that my eyes caught was a clear plaque hanging by a black ribbon on the wall. It says, "Home is where your story begins." I felt like I could breathe for the first time in my life.

My boyfriend loves to make our kids laugh, so while I'm cooking dinner in the kitchen, he and the kids are running throughout their room, the hallway and the living room screaming and laughing. It's my favorite noise. When we eat dinner, we all sit down at our big, brown dinner table in the kitchen and eat as a family. This is very important to my boyfriend and me because we never have been able to do this with our kids before. After dinner is bath time, and it's always fun. My children enjoy taking a real bath in their own bathroom instead of taking turns in the showers at the homeless shelter.

Have you ever been so proud of something because you earned it, fought for it, and achieved it? That is how I feel about my apartment. Every day when I walk through the front door, I feel an inner peace knowing that this place is still going to be my family's home when I come back. Being homeless, my boyfriend and I were constantly worrying about where we were going to be sleeping next, if we would be kicked out of this place soon, but, most importantly, would our kids be safe? Having this apartment, being in Saranam, and making the positive changes we need to have changed our perspective on life and what being happy and stable really means. My apartment is like my rock and without it I would be lost, my apartment is my Heaven on Earth. It's full of life, love, and happiness, and I treasure every moment my family has when we are all there.

## STEP 2

# Education Brings Employment Opportunities



Equally important to a stable present is a secure future. Through education, parents grow their potential as providers, problem-solvers, and advocates for their children. Education builds assets. Together with employment, families thrive, and poverty becomes a part of their past.

Saranam's classes are part of an integrated curriculum designed to prepare our parents to transition into being college students by Spring of their first year in the program.

Saranam's Adult Academic and Vocational Education includes an assessment of current academic skills, GED preparation, and individualized academic instruction for those students who have a GED or high-school diploma. On average, each Saranam student receives almost 200 hours of academic education in their first semester. Classes are mandatory for all Saranam adults during the first year in our program, unless they are already enrolled in college-level academic courses at an accredited institution.



**ACADEMIC  
AND LIFE SKILLS**  
during a typical first  
year at Saranam

Adult Academic/  
Vocational  
**ALMOST  
200  
HOURS**

Adult Life Skills  
**505  
HOURS**

Children and  
Family Life Skills  
**200+  
HOURS**

### YEAR ONE FALL SEMESTER

#### **Academic and Life Skills on-site**

The curriculum guides participants to identify higher educational goals and prepares them to pursue those ambitions. This provides the foundational understanding of topics they will most likely encounter once they are attending college classes in the Spring semester.

### YEAR ONE SPRING SEMESTER

#### **Life Skills on-site**

#### **Vocational/Academic classes off-site**

The curriculum builds upon Fall semester progress by exploring their capacity to express themselves through presentation. Through self-reflective writing assignments and in-class presentations, Spring semester aims to build confidence to articulate ideas and experiences. Classes are held in the morning to

allow participants to attend afternoon classes at the accredited institution of their choice.

### YEAR ONE SUMMER SEMESTER

#### **Life Skills on-site**

#### **Vocational/Academic classes off-site**

The curriculum consists of employability skills, offered in the morning once a week. This class provides an overview of important skills needed to attain employment with opportunities to practice those skills. Participants practice resume and portfolio building, job searches, job interviews, and collaborate on team-based research and presentations. Participants are expected to be enrolled in summer classes at the accredited institution of their choice.

### YEAR TWO

#### **Vocational/Academic class off-site**

*Each week Saranam has a unique essential question that is woven through all activities and academics.*

#### WEEK 14 QUESTION

## How do our values guide us in our family and career choices?

In Parenting class, parents may discuss the role of values in establishing a healthy home environment, while in the Effective Communication and English classes, further discussion and writing prompts continue the conversation in more detail — giving them the opportunity to explore the topic in more detail. Later in the week, our College Success class builds on these lessons through a goal-setting exercise to connect their individual values to the goals they plan to achieve at Saranam. The themes of values and goal setting are then reinforced in our evening life skills activities as well, bringing the children into the conversation. Together these lessons lay the foundation for our parents/students to begin realizing for themselves the educational goals they will pursue in the Spring semester.



#### SARANAM'S ADULT LIFE SKILLS

Classes are offered throughout the first year of the program to help clients develop and sustain their roles as parents, community members, and potential employees.

##### Classes include:

- Parenting
- Effective Communication
- Organization and Time Management
- College Success
- Employability Skills
- Financial Management
- Health and Nutrition
- Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention
- General and Sexual Health
- Drug and Alcohol Prevention
- Personal and Family Values Identification
- Mindfulness

### EDUCATION = INCREASED INCOME

Because Saranam understands how important education is for stability, education is a core component of the program.

- » The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that individuals with a high-school diploma or GED earned, on average, an additional \$9,000 during 2017. Earnings increased by an additional \$3,000 for those individuals with some college experience, with a further \$3,000 increase seen in those who obtained an Associate's degree.
- » In addition to the increased earning potential, individuals with a high-school diploma saw a 2% decrease in unemployment rates, and the unemployment rate decreased an additional 1% for those individuals possessing an Associate's degree.



## FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Just as education is key for adult growth and success, at Saranam we know a robust child education component is also needed. By focusing our education on both adults and children, families get what they need to create a legacy of economic stability and overall well-being that passes from one generation to the next.



### *A Note on 2020*

In keeping with COVID-19 safe guidelines, we got creative. In March, as Covid surrounded us, protocols were established for the safety of our staff, volunteers, and families. As a result, all in-person activities halted.

We were unable to have any volunteers working with our families. This didn't stop programming for Saranam. Our staff's creativity found ways to continue meaningful work with our families and meet their needs. We provided services via Zoom and break-out rooms, and customized family packets were delivered on doorsteps — all with a focus aligned for serving the unique needs for the year we were living in.

This year our weekly family life skills focused quite a bit on empathy, identifying feelings/emotions, how to express them, self-regulation, stress management – for both parents and adults — especially important in 2020 with everyone's being at home together for extended periods of time.

Specifically, we provided the family with a computer, internet, headphones, additional supplies including paper, craft materials, and educational supports as needed.

We increased focus on supporting/educating parents about how best to help their children during Covid. How to set, implement, and follow: structure/routine, sleep schedule, exercise daily, empathy first, clear communication, developmental stages, and communicating/advocating with teachers.

This is all key to a healthy household and is part of the regular Saranam children's programming. However, in 2020 our delivery model shifted, and focus areas became even more personalized to ensure the continuation of Saranam's commitment of serving the needs of each family.



### STEP 3

## Community Builds Connections



Everybody needs somebody. That's why we bring Saranam families in together once a year. That's why we function in the cohort model. Saranam families live, attend classes, socialize, and grow together. We know that community holds us accountable and provides support. Community makes us stronger.



Community is fun and feels good. Research also shows us that community connections and relationships among children and adults help with healthy brain development, improved social capacity, and decreasing parental stress. We believe that the lack of community support systems is a key underlying cause of homelessness. At Saranam, we strive to make sure that relationship-building and community are an integral part of every aspect of our program.



#### BOOK READING WITH AUTHOR BJ NOVAK

Albuquerque Involved brought BJ Novak and Suzie Tallman to Saranam in February. Families gathered to listen to BJ read his book *The Book With No Pictures* and to enjoy music with Suzie Tallman. The day was filled with laughter and joy. Everyone had fun!

We bring an entire class of families into the program at one time. Beginning with orientation, we build relationships in a peer group model. Participants move through the two-year program together. Families in our program live in the same apartment complex as neighbors, classmates, and friends.

This intentional community is a unique model for serving families who are experiencing homelessness. Families in our program have new opportunities together. They enjoy gardening, cooking, socializing and learning at the Weil Family Center, our hub for community and family programming.

**2020 changed HOW Saranam created community,  
but it did not stop us from building our community.**

We have not socialized, gardened, cooked, or otherwise gathered in person since March 2020. We have all become experts on how to Zoom together — from our adults down to our babies. The babies love the attention they get through these screens. Our second-year families knew how hard it would be for the new families and went out of their way to introduce themselves personally (masked) and brought cupcakes and individualized goodie bags to each of the new families. Through Zoom, our families chat and socialize, although this is harder for those that are naturally quieter or reserved. Nevertheless, they have been able to form friendships — they





bring each other special meals to try and delicious morning coffee. Families have gotten to know each other well enough to trust new friends with babysitting — a necessity since our adults must be able to guarantee a quiet, uninterrupted space during exams. They help each other with transportation, especially during the cold weather. They look out for each other — from watering each other's gardens and plants, to taking in packages. Just like all of us, they created their own safe pods.

For our children, community building continues too. Parents share how much their children look forward to the Family and Community classes — for many of our kids, this is their only opportunity to socialize with anyone that doesn't live in their apartment. The kids look for each other and notice when one of their favorites is missing. They are friends, even if they can't play in person.

**Despite the physical distancing, we still have stability, growth, and hope; and Saranam's community continues stronger than ever.**

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- » **Data is important!** Data helps us evaluate program effectiveness, thus better serving our families.
- » **Our new client database** allows us to track our current families' class attendance and engagement as well as incorporate alumni data to follow long-term progress in education and housing.
- » **Saranam has served families for over 17 years** and many of the children are now adults. Of the 142 families who have exited Saranam, our Family Stability Advocate continues serving 124 of those families.
- » **We began a collaboration with the UNM Evaluation Lab** to evaluate our logical framework better, using data from our alumni survey.



#### Community Partners



**EVERY YEAR WE OFFER A COMMUNITY RESOURCES** class to our first-year parents. We invite a variety of speakers in order to introduce our families to resources available to them in the greater Albuquerque community.

In October 2020, Mary Ann Snow, a nurse and a faculty member of CNM, presented to our families about vaccines, including a primer on how our immune systems work, what immunity means, and how diseases are spread. She also focused on how vaccines are developed, researched, and tested, and what that means in terms of safety for the people receiving them. (We also got an interesting mini-lesson on the history of vaccines!) This lesson was especially important for us to receive factual information during the time the COVID-19 vaccine was being developed.

Our students were grateful for this education. The comments were enthusiastic, saying that it was especially useful to learn – very concretely – how vaccines work in the body to prevent disease and how vaccines help to keep their children healthy. One mother said, “I used to wonder if I was doing the right thing letting my baby get all these shots. Now I know that is it right and important to keep her safe.”



# Alumni Programing

## Saranam Provides the Opportunity for Long-Term Family Stability

Saranam's alumni programing provides support to families after they have exited. Our staff and community engage with alumni families to provide emotional support, assistance with navigating through any challenges, and referrals to community or job resources. Saranam holds events for alumni, including educational and community-building and continued high-level life skills classes.

By participating in Saranam's alumni programming, our families are continuing the healthy living concepts learned and put into practice while at Saranam. This programing allows us into the lives of families no longer living under our roof to continue providing support to make healthy decisions. Saranam also provides families with additional resources and can make referrals to specific community support agencies.

Each year Saranam's annual reunion allows past and present families to reconnect and share their stories with each other. To observe the families' progress post-exit, we also ask families to complete an alumni follow-up survey. Not only does this survey allow us to monitor the success of the families after they leave our program but it also allows us to monitor the success of the program itself.

124 families  
with 255 children  
and 143 adults  
have exited our  
program and now  
participate in the  
alumni program

75% of families  
who exited one year  
or more ago  
have remained  
in contact

86% of families  
who left  
the program  
successfully  
remain stable  
after a year

DID  
YOU  
KNOW?



*This program is possible through a generous gift from Evelyn and Gerhard Salinger.*

### Saranam began a matched savings program for our families.

Through a partnership with Prosperity Works, a local nonprofit, Saranam offers alumni families the opportunity to participate in a unique savings program called an IDA (Individual Development Account). Saranam "savers" can have savings up to \$1,000 matched 4:1, with up to \$4,000 added to their accounts. These savings can only be used for a specific goal, such as a down payment on a home, continuing postsecondary education, starting a small business, or purchasing a vehicle.

In 2020, our first year with this program, fourteen Saranam families participated. Five

of these "savers" are two-generational participants, meaning they were enrolled in Saranam as children. All five are saving to continue their postsecondary education. This result signifies important progress in breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

Additionally, Prosperity Works also has a child savings account (CSA) program called Prosperity Kids for second-year families to start saving and continue as alumni. The CSAs provide a college savings and family stabilization plan to help families save money for college and unanticipated emergencies. Deposits made by families into their CSA are matched up to \$200/year for a maximum of five years.



# Shelby's Story



**Our mission is not just to end homelessness for two years: it is to ensure the security of a family for generations.**

Shelby became a part of the Saranam family ten years ago. The lessons she learned have continued to improve her life and her community.

Her life before Saranam, Shelby says, was on a rough path. She was recovering from a drug addiction, had just left a volatile relationship, and recently completed a cross-country move. On top of everything, she was eight-months pregnant. She was alone and unsure of how to make her way on her own. Applying to Saranam was her path forward. She was accepted and moved in with her two-month old baby.

She was surprised at how fully her needs were taken care of at Saranam. Though she had always tried to be independent, having furnishings, supplies, and clothing took a weight off and allowed her to focus on the future.

With Saranam's help, she created a balanced routine and designed a new educational plan that excited her. She had previously pursued culinary arts but was terribly discouraged to find that her credits didn't transfer. She found her passion at the intersection of culinary culture and anthropology, which she focused her studies on.

More than anything, she says, she learned to be self-sufficient.

"I needed to learn to grow on my own – that's what Saranam taught me. I still have those fun-

damentals to this day and appreciate them so much more now as a single mother. I don't need anyone to help me. I am capable."

Those lessons have enabled her to offer her daughter, now ten, a head-start in life. Since they successfully exited the program her daughter has been able to attend quality schools, has always known a stable home, and has grown up with a mother rich in confidence and resilience.

***"I feel so much more empowered now. I can take life by the horns."***

Shelby now works in a thriving industry in Arizona, where she has sky-rocketed up the career ladder to become the purchasing manager for her company. Having a secure, skilled job has kept her stable throughout the pandemic and given her confidence that she can weather anything that comes next.

She still carries her favorite part of the program – the warm, encouraging support of the community – with her. From the regular baby pow-wows to shoulders to cry on through the roughest of days, the program changed her view of the world. That change of perspective still guides how she builds her own community to this day.

"I felt nurtured, so now I can do that for others. I try to give out to the community as much as I can as a peer counselor and through our business. That started at Saranam."



*“I needed to learn  
to grow on my own  
—that’s what  
Saranam taught me.”*

The past decade has not faded the memories of the laughter, healing, and triumph she had at Saranam. She hopes her story can inspire other families to find the same.

*“You can do anything you really want to.  
Today does not define anything.  
Tomorrow is always new.”*

Shelby is proof that the investments we make in families are a down-payment on a thriving future. After seventeen years of service, the long-term impact of our program continues to build generational, community change.





“It is not the length  
of the life, but the  
depth of the life.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Saranam mourns the passing of two of our participants – both fathers.**




**ANDREW** was a soft-spoken man who often had laughter in his eyes. He was fiercely devoted to his wife and sons. While in Saranam, Andrew earned his Nursing Assistant certificate and said he truly enjoyed caring for others. He was generous with his time and expertise, often helping his friends and neighbors make car repairs. He was also an avid gardener. But the thing he loved best was spending time with his family, cooking together, playing video games with his boys, and just being together.



**RUBEN** was a gentle giant and a good student. He enjoyed learning new things, and was especially surprised to learn how much he loved creating art, whether it was painting or sculpting. Ruben worked hard to provide his daughter with a safe and stable home, and he was so very proud of her. He loved telling stories of how much she was learning and growing! Ruben's other love in life was basketball, and he played on several recreational leagues during the year.

*They will both be greatly missed.*



# We couldn't do it without you! Thank you!



Volunteers in the United States are 63 million strong and hold up the foundation of civil society. They help their neighbors, serve their communities, and provide expertise. No matter what kind of volunteer work they do, they are

contributing in invaluable ways. The national value of volunteer time was \$28.54 per hour (source: independentsector.org).

Volunteering didn't look the same in 2020. The number of people able to participate in in-person activities were significantly reduced – yet we still accomplished the tasks needed to support our families and the program successfully.

Know that we miss you and can't wait to welcome everyone back sometime soon.

305  
UNDUPLICATED  
VOLUNTEERS

2520  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

\$71,920  
VALUE TO  
SARANAM!

## The unique ways volunteers were part of Saranam in 2020

- Life skills and enrichment activities via Zoom
- Computer maintenance
- Decorating apartments
- Guest lectures via Zoom
- Family tutorials via Zoom
- Children book readings via Zoom
- Hosting community activities and events via Zoom
- Landscaping and gardening work
- Creating promotional materials and videos
- Making masks, food, and toys
- Monthly supply shopping online
- Moving and setting up furniture
- Serving on Saranam Board and Committees
- Tutoring children and adults via Zoom
- Warehouse sorting and cleaning

**We couldn't do it without you. Together we are stronger.**



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Nancy Benton  
Leslie Hoffman  
Dodie and John Knight  
Judy and Howard Mock  
Patty and Damian Montoya  
Sue Rzendzian  
John Teas

**In Memory of Richard D. Jones**  
Margaret and Don Lenk

**In Memory of Wim Kramer**  
Margaret Kramer

**In Memory of Shelley Markham**  
Maggie's Giving Circle

**In Memory of Vincent McNamara**  
Trish Fittipaldi

**In Memory of Betty Neiman**  
Linda Rudeen

**In Memory of Wanda O'Nan**  
Firecracker Leadership

**In Memory of Art and Jennie Mae Othick**  
Lois Lorentzen

**In Memory of Jennifer Riordan**  
Thomas S. Dietrich  
Katie and Ken Meyer



**In Memory of Ruth Margaret (Peggy) Ryder**  
Connie and Bob Pinkham

**In Memory of Eric G. Thompson**  
Susan Thompson

**In Memory of Dean Thornbrough**  
Norma Thornbrough

**In Memory of Valerie Toney**  
Jenilee and Bill Woodward

**In Memory of Alice Vancil**  
Sue and Dave Campbell

**In Memory of Steve Weaver**  
Chris Baca  
Kathy Duncan  
Sally Elkady  
Bill Keleher  
Rob Lasater and Carol Spuhler  
Patricia Renken  
Kathryn and James Stephens  
Linda Weil

**In Memory of Bud Wellborn**  
Glenda and Dr. William Sterling

**In Memory of Jesse and Oscar Whitworth**  
Lois Lorentzen

#### **GIFTS MADE TO THE SEAN HOPKINS MEMORIAL ACTIVITY FUND**

Rachel and Billy Gupton  
LaDonna and Paul Hopkins  
Cheryl and Richard Montoya  
Kathryn and James Stephens

## **Estate Gift from Karen Leita**

Saranam received a wonderful surprise when Bruce J. Puma Jr. Esq., estate attorney, contacted us late in 2020 to let us know Karen Leita had left a large gift to us in her estate. According to Bruce, she first heard about Saranam through friends of hers, Paul and LaDonna Hopkins, and then again from Bruce himself when she asked him what she could do with her estate. Ms. Leita increased the percentage she designated to Saranam over the last years of her life. This gift of over \$300,000 will help secure stability in families at Saranam for years to come.

Just as Frances Thaxton Ash's vision to end homelessness and poverty was realized through her founding estate gift in 2001, Karen Leita's will provide resources and support for families to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness permanently.

### **Could this be you?**

You can make a legacy gift that will provide support to families who seek hope and a new future of security and financial stability. By doing so, you will be actively benefitting your loved ones and your community.

For more information about how to include Saranam in your estate plan, contact us at 505.299.6154 x103.



# SARANAM SCALABILITY

## Expanding the Work

**Saranam is committed to being a sustainable solution to family homelessness.**

We have operated at our current 24-unit campus on the east side of Albuquerque since 2005. This year we purchased a 3.5-acre property on the west side of Albuquerque with the intention of building a second campus, allowing us to more than double our capacity for serving families. Just like our current location, this property will provide many necessities for our clients: safety, transportation, groceries, child care, and other services. It is on the bus lines that makes it easy to access UNM and CNM campuses.

The concept design for the expansion project includes 25 small homes, playground and gathering spaces, a community garden, and parking. The 3.5-acre space will also include programming/classrooms, storage, and office space.

We look forward to making this vision a reality. Stay tuned for more information, or reach out to Tracy Weaver at [tweaver@saranamabq.org](mailto:tweaver@saranamabq.org).





## STAFF

**Tracy Weaver**  
*Executive Director*

**Darren Sandow**  
*Director of Operations*

**Dianne Campbell**  
*Director of Development*

**Jennifer Mullen**  
*Director of Family Services*

**Ian Vetter**  
*Director of Education*

**Ellen Shepherd**  
*Director of Continuous Improvement*

**Stephanie Johnston**  
*Family Stability Advocate*

**Maria Jensen**  
*Family & Community Coordinator*

**Jennifer Clear**  
*Housing Coordinator*

**Olga Shapovalova**  
*Administrative Coordinator*

**Julie Green**  
*Bookkeeper*

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## You can help end homelessness for families in Albuquerque!

Go to our website to donate, to sign up for our newsletter,  
and to become involved with Saranam.

[Saranamabq.org](http://Saranamabq.org)

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

 [facebook.com/SaranamLLC](https://facebook.com/SaranamLLC)

 [Saranam\\_abq](https://www.instagram.com/Saranam_abq)

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