

# Vera House Incorporated

## Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 5:30- 7:30

## Community Foundation

Virtual option available, link provided via email.

1. Welcome/ Housekeeping
  - a. Introductions
  - b. Review/approve of February Minutes
  - c. Robert's Rules (Art. III, Sec. 11 By-Laws)
2. Board Roles/Opportunities
  - a. Policies, Expectations – Katie Centolella (Agency Counsel)
3. Budget/Finances Discussion/Updates
  - a. 2022 Audit update
  - b. 2024 Budget update
  - c. General discussion, update
4. Executive Updates, provided by Daquetta and Dana
  - a. Executive Team report
  - b. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual White Ribbon Campaign – April 1<sup>st</sup>
    - i. Meetings in March, if you want to join reach out to Carrie.
  - c. Agency support: Feedback re: Board roles/support opportunities
  - d. Template, review and discuss
5. Contingency Strategic Planning discussion
6. Board Fundraising Development
  - a. Harvey's Garden update, \$183 raised.
  - b. Carrie V. lead apparel fundraising opportunities.
  - c. Fundraising ideas/discussion
    - i. Additional ideas
    - ii. Restaurant days, percentage of sales that day (usually w/ flyer)
    - iii. Social media campaigns- help to identify specific needs.
    - iv. Discuss: Amazon Wish List focused – request/push.
7. Committees Updates/Discussion
  - i. Audit and Finance Committee  
Chair: Susan Petrosillo
    1. No further action by Agency on the outstanding audit items required for Grossman St. Amour.

2. Auditors returning to complete the 2022 Audit has not been scheduled, due to open items above.
3. No financial reports shared with Committee.
4. We agreed to meet with Capital CFO to understand their offerings and pricing. This is at Daquetta's request. They would assist Agency with getting caught up.
5. Capital CFO must offer us a deliverable based SOW, which includes wrapping up the 2022 Audit.
6. Daquetta will schedule the A&F Committee with Capital CFO week of March 25<sup>th</sup>.

ii. Board Development Committee  
Chair: Dawn Penson

1. Bi-monthly meetings
2. Finalized Board application
  - a. Requires board approval
3. 2024 Board matrix
4. Incoming prospects and scheduled interviews
5. Board and Agency consultants

iii. Program Committee  
Chair: Mitayah Donerlson

iv. Property Committee  
Chair: Kyle Metzler

1. See attached update.

v. Personnel Committee  
Chair: Kamesha Graves

8. New Business/Other
9. Identify action items

Please review the following attachments prior to our meeting:

- a. February minutes
- b. Executive Team report template
- c. Contingency Strategic Planning
- d. Board Responsibility Agenda
- e. Committee update reports:
  - i. Property Committee

**Thank you!**



It is the mission of Vera House, Inc. to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

February 20, 2024

**Attendees BOD:**

Dawn Penson  
Ebony Pengel  
Kyle Metzler  
Mitayah Donerlson  
Sapna Kollali  
Susan Petrosillo  
Monica Coles  
Nalisha Barron  
Amelia

**Attendees VH:**

Daquetta Jones  
Dana Zanders

**Virtual**

Sandra Russell

**Absent**

Stefani Savory                      Dana Zanders

The opening of the meeting and introductions was presented by Ebony Pengel.

Motion to call Meeting to order: 1<sup>st</sup> – Ebony P. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Susan P.

MINUTES: Minutes of previous meeting 01-16-24 was viewed and approved by all.

## REPORTS:

### Report - Daquetta Jones, CEO

#### AGENCY UPDATES — JANUARY 2024 — PART 1

##### Chief Executive Office Update:

- Scheduled meetings with funders / community partners
  - Met with Olive and Beth at Interfaith Works 1/5/24
  - Met with Janice Green, USDOJ 1/8/24
  - Met with OCC Counseling Center Leadership 1/26/24
  - Met with YWCA Niagara Frontier 1/12/24
  - Rescheduled to meet 1/27/24 with OCO re: best practices and improve collaboration re: Hud Funded position
  - CVTC in process of scheduling meeting with NYSDOCCS re: PREA
  - Met with Meg O'Connell, Allyn Foundation 1/11/2024
  - Met with Nan from United Way on 1/23/24
  - Participated in 12 Men Model final session/ceremony - 1/10/24
  - Attended HSLC full membership meeting 1/12/24
  - Attended Break Stalking Community Discussion at One Group 1/11/24
  - Met with Stacy Phillips (OVW) DOJ on 1/22/24
  - Attended HSLC New ED Affinity Group 1/17/24
  - Effective Jan – meetings with County are bi-monthly (next meeting 3/15/24) and meeting with State Agencies monthly until Feb.
  - All Advocates Training at McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center 1/17/24
  - Continue to meet with board members 1:1. Felicity coordinating meetings with Board of Trustees
  - Scheduled to meet with Chief ADA, Jarrett Woodstock, Feb 6, 2024
  - Attended Elder Justice Coalition meeting 1/18/24
  - Met with Tania from ARISE

#### AGENCY UPDATES — JANUARY 2024 — PART 2

##### Chief Executive Office Update:

- Switch from T-Mobile to Verizon saving over \$1,300k per month (about \$18k annually)
- Provided Letter of Support for Laliga CNY re: housing
- ACC Technical Services now providing an elevated Network and IT services. Contract with Bob H ended 1/29/24
- Safe Dwelling – North Shelter scheduled to open on Feb 2
- OCFS Renewal Application for DV Shelter submitted along with Performance Improvement Plan 1/26/2024
- Facility maintenance issue: Boiler at Admin Building addressed
- Submitted QUOTES re: fence repair and improved security system (OCFS grant could support improved security system. Fence repair cannot be paid for through this fund.
- Accepted OPDV Flexible Spending Funds \$35k
  - o McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center partner
  - o Submitted successfully on Jan 16, 2024
- 2024 Onondaga County Contracts (4) In-progress - two contracts executed.
- Executed Upstate Medical SANE Contract (3 year)
- Submitted VH Directors and Officers Insurance due by 2/16/24

## COO Report – Tricia Matthews, COO

- **Department Presentations**

### WHAT IS NEW WITH CLINICAL TEAM 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of separate individuals served	163											
# sessions completed	499											
% safety planning	100%											
# of no shows	63											

During the month of February, clinical leadership will be submitting a proposal asking for supportive funds to cover an appointment reminder system. This system will send automatic reminders (by text or email) to clients with scheduled appointments as a measure to decrease the frequency of unattended sessions.

Two of our clinicians have recently passed their licensure exams! This is a major step on their way to becoming fully licensed marriage and family therapists in New York!

### WHAT'S NEW WITH ADVOCACY 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# Clients served	671											
# days between crisis call and assigned advocate	0											
# of referrals into Advocacy	99											

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE SHELTER 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Clients Housed	24											
# clients denied	10											
AVG LOS	22											

# WHAT'S NEW WITH PREVENTION EDUCATION 2024

Metric	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOVEM	DECEMBER
# of People Reached through Prevention Education Programs	432											
# of Direct Service hours	16											
# of Vacant Positions	4											

## January Highlights:

- Completed 12 Men Model training with our partners, 100 Black Men of Syracuse, PEACE Inc., and other community members.
- Met with additional community partners to facilitate our youth programming with SUN ESF Tabling, Le Moyne College Tabling, Pomeroy College School of Nursing Presentation, Engaging Men on College Campuses Webinar.
- Meeting with Onondaga Community College partners to reaffirm memorandum of understanding between the college and the agency.
- Youth Education Program with Westhill, Jamesville-Dewit Middle School, Chestnut Hill Middle School, Nottingham HS, ELMS
- Direct service: Call outs, and working with shelter clients, facilitating Heal and Reclaim
- Interviewing for vacant positions

# SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER – SANE 2024

Metric	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
# of Call Outs	27											
# of Call Outs w/o Exam	8											

## WHAT'S NEW WITH ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) PROGRAM – JANUARY 2024 – PART ONE

### General EAJ Activity – January Highlights:

- A. Staffing – setting up interviewing for the Elder Advocate, Outreach Coordinator, and ALL Coordinator positions
- B. Onboarding and Staff Training – preparing to present training to Advocacy about Elder Abuse in January and Community Partners
- C. Representation – represented VH at Senior Companion Council (IFW), Aging Services Network, and DOJ meetings
- D. Grant Management – investigating new solicitations; discussing priorities, intentions with community MOU/partners in February time frame

### ALTC-AGING Grant – January Highlights:

- A. Elder Abuse Conference – venue, date secured, exploring themes/speakers, preparing sponsorship marketing with Development, and finalizing EAC planning committee
- B. Elder Justice Coalition – monthly meetings convened and EAC Planning and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression SubCommittees attended
- C. Evergreen Network – expanded distribution to over 400 partners, January/February newsletter prepared and sent
- D. Community Outreach – preparing partnerships with Interfaith Works and the Syracuse Peacemaking Center

### OVC Expanded Community Outreach Response to Elder Abuse (ECORE) GRANT – January Highlights:

- A. Christopher Communities – contracted 2024, updated MOU, planning February launch
- B. Center for Justice Innovations – contracting complete; planning expansion of services with February launch
- C. Case Management – needing updating

## WHAT'S NEW WITH ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) PROGRAM – JANUARY 2024 – PART TWO

### OVW Abuse in Later Life (ALL) GRANT – Highlights:

- A. Syracuse Housing Authority – contract complete, ready to launch in February
- B. Victim Services – the advocacy department has been addressing older client needs at this time
- C. Survivor Support Services – support group carried on with 9 continuing clients
- D. Training and Cross-Training – continued reconnecting with NCALL, OVW TTA to launch activities

### LIFESPAN Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (EMDT) Coordination for Central New York - Highlights:

- A. Currently serving seven counties of EMDT committees
- B. Caseload of over 30 cases currently during most months
- C. Typically, 2-3 new cases in the areas of domestic violence and financial

### Elder Abuse Education and Outreach Program (EAEOP)

- A. Making inquiries to apply for 2024
- B. Preparing Grant Application

## ALTERNATIVE STEPS 2024

### OUTCOMES FOR JANUARY 2024

Continued participants – 53

New participants – 34

Total participants (January) - 87

Total participants that completed 15 weeks - 11

• PREA BOD for the month of January 2024

• Total number of participants – 10.

## HUMAN RESOURCES PROJECT GOALS IN FLIGHT

- Agency Orientation / Regulatory Compliance Training Program for 2024
  - Orientation general session
  - New hire Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention training for all Vera House
  - Self-paced, independent learning modules
  - Certification requirements for specialized areas
- General Ledger Interface (GLI)
  - Implementation in progress to supply electronic payroll data feeds to BlackBaud to strengthen efficiency and accuracy
- Time off policy proposal for July 2024
  - Evaluate PTO structure, rollover, thresholds, & propose PTO bank
  - Utilize HR systems to automate accruals
- Staff performance review process for 2024

## FINANCE UPDATES 2024

### Staffing

#### Vacant Positions

- Grants and Contracts Financial Administrator
- Senior Grants Accountant

#### State and County Fiscal Reporting Priorities

- FVPSA Core, FVPSA ARP DVPI
- OVS - BAR, Q3 and Q4
- DCJS SA, DCJS SANE
- OVW - Q3 and Q4
- County Contracts
  - Adult and Long-Term Care
  - Adult Mental Health
  - Child and Youth Counseling
  - Child Preventative Services

## Additionally:

- The 2024 budget was not completed for February's committee meeting
- 2024 Budget will be sent to Audit and Finance Committee by March 6th, 2024
- March 8th Audit and Finance Committee meeting.
- Correspondence surrounding Grants and Awards have not been verified.
- Team is working on getting caught up on billing.
- Meeting scheduled for 2/28/2024 @ 2pm to discuss Capital CFO
- The information for Capital CFO will be distributed to all board members.
- Position to engage Capital CFO given our current financial situation was discussed.
- Since The Foundation have not had to cover payroll for 2 cycles, will they be able to cover CFO.
- Discussion on if Community Foundation does Bridge Loans. This may be an option for the organization to assist with the gap between being awarded grants and actually receiving them.
- Emails were sent to be billed but we have not received any responses.
- It was indicated we are not the only local organization in this situation.

## Development Report – Carrie Veley, Director Development

# WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT 2024

### Development Successes

NCC – Feb 3rd event garnered approximately 100 attendees and raised nearly \$10,000 between ticket sales, auctions, wine pull and in-kind donations.

Social Media audience reflects total growth of 15%, respectively, with market growth of between 13% and 150%. Intentionally posting specific to VH peak engagement hours and optimizing market saturation by boosting posts that are rich with Org relevant content.

Constant Contact reflects lower bounce rate, as expired/bounce-back emails are regularly monitored and removed, which reduces cost and provides clear line-of-sight to engagement and click through rates, optimizing messaging.

Vera House is currently out-performing industry standards in these metrics! Woot woot :)

Assisted with HR's completion and rollout of recruitment platform by interfacing open positions on VH website: [Career Center button](#) and [Hyperlink](#). LinkedIn Business Access in-progress.

Created Ad supporting for HSLC Member Newsletter (To lend visibility to open positions/Now Hiring).

### On the Horizon

#### VH Annual Campaigns

WRC – April 2024, planning underway

EAC – June 2024

Gala/DV Campaign – Oct 2024

#### Community Calendar:

Harveys Garden – Charity Monday, Feb 26th

#### Currently Confirmed:

2024 Pride Parade, June 22

Spring/Summer Events Calendar – coming soon!

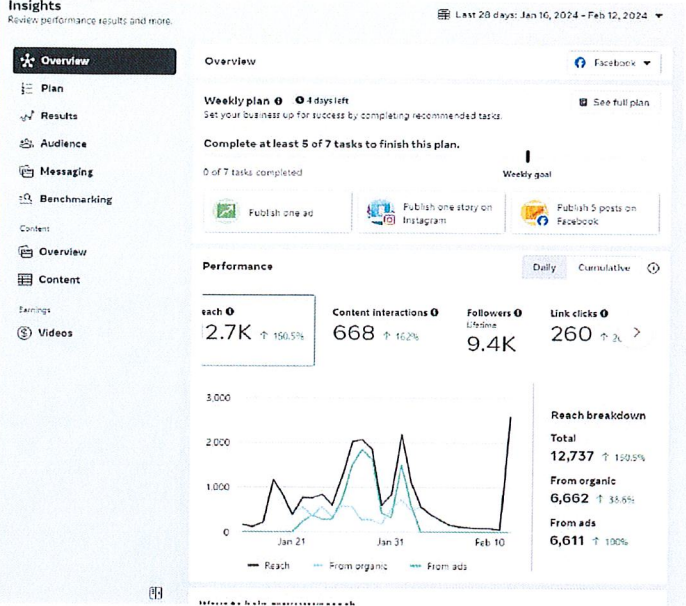
### Development Needs

Development/Marketing/Events Coordinator

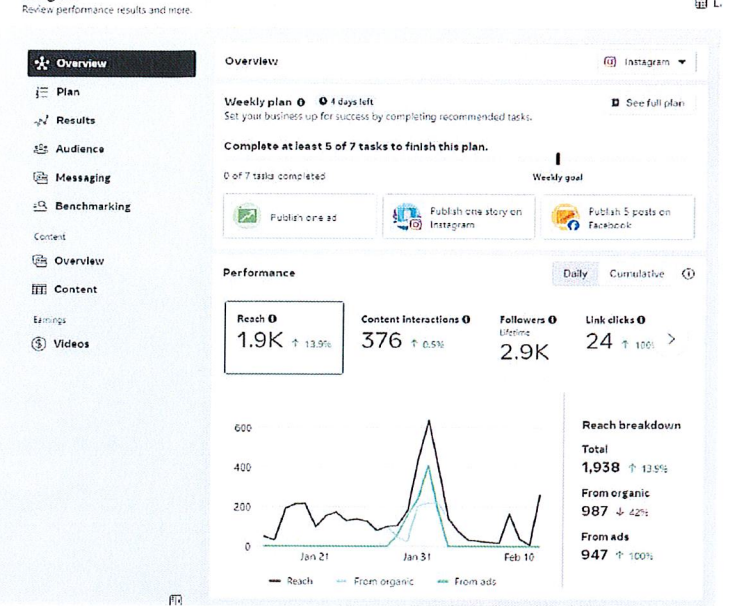
Training in Raisers Edge/Blackbaud/Greater Giving as these are the primary fundraising platforms used to support all events and all trained staff are no longer with the Org.

# SOCIAL MEDIA/MARKETING GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

## Facebook



## Instagram



# SOCIAL MEDIA/MARKETING GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

Neon One  
<https://neonone.com/resources/blog/nonprofit-email-benchmarks>

## Nonprofit Email Benchmarks You Need to Know - Neon One

The average nonprofit email open rate is **28.59%**. That's much higher than the average open rate for for-profit organizations—according to Campaign Monitor and MailChip, the average open rate across all industries hovers between 21% and 21.5%. See more

Vera House email open rates have increased from roughly 12% (2022) to **40%** (2024) which surpasses industry standards by more than 10%. Our subscribed audience is engaged and interested in what we are saying! :)

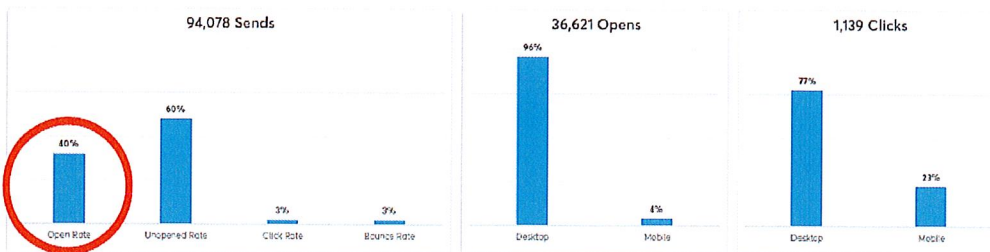
Home Marketing campaigns Contacts Reporting Tools Create Contact Upgrade

Post 90 Days Click-to-open rate

### Overview

A look at some of your top emailing stats during the selected time range.

Download As



### Trends

## **Additionally:**

### **White Ribbon Campaign**

- Meeting schedule March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Discuss how the WRC looks for the organization this year.
- Research shows the WRC campaign normally happens nationally in November, so we are OK to move it to April.
- The campaign will not contain the walk as it has traditionally due to capacity.

### **February 3rd Fundraiser**

- The event was successful in raising funds for the Organization.
- Photos of the event was sent to Ebony. Please let her know if you would like photos sent to you.

### **Upcoming event at Harvey's Garden on 2/26/2024**

- The Board to share and invite anyone they know.
- Games are planned.
- Event is family friendly.
- There will be items we can raffle and that we can do a 50/50.
- 30% of the beer profits from that night will go to the organization.

### **Board Development Committee – Dawn P.**

- Two interviews are scheduled for April 2nd for additional board members.
- Board Application will be revamped, and a Board Matrix will be created and will be on SharePoint Site.
- Board Policies will also be updated by Katie.
- The Board will sign them in the March 2024 meeting.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

### **Property Committee**

Next meeting is March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **Program committee -**

Next meeting in April 2024

### **Personnel Committee**

Next meeting in March 2024

### **Audit and Finance Committee**

Next meeting is March 8th, 2024.

- Template completed and sent to the committee members.
- This committee will meet the 2nd Friday of every month.
- The committee has 2 objectives:
  - Review the audit results and talk about financials.
  - Review mutual long-term goals, plan to stabilize the budget and stop the need for funding from the foundation.
- Additional items that were discussed are:
  - Improving the perception of the agency in the community.
  - Potentially getting funding from United Way.
  - The Agency was able to cover its own payroll for the 2nd one in January and 1st in February
  - Agency's focus on grants for 2024.

- The audit work has been stalled due to a shift in focus on grants.
- Financial reports have a 15-day close so when the audit and finance committee is reviewing them, they will be 1 month behind.
- The Board is considering a contingency plan in the event cash flow is not stabilized in April/May.
- Audits for non-profits are started in April.

**Other:**

- A satisfaction survey was not conducted in 2023.
- A discussion to do the survey in March 2024 through survey monkey with 30 days to complete.

**Meeting Adjourn 8:15pm 1<sup>st</sup> Ebony P., 2<sup>nd</sup> Susan P.**

**Next Meeting Scheduled: March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**



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to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and  
sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

**BOARD PROPERTY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Virtual Meeting  
March 11, 2024, 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Present:**

Kyle Metzler  
Will Coldsmith  
Felicity Hall  
Sandra Russell

**Absent:**

Dawn Penson  
Ebony Pengel  
Daquetta Jones  
Tricia Matthews

**Motion to start Board Meeting 12:04pm by Kyle Metzler**

**Ethics Moment: Election Season – Talking Politics at Work and Situational Awareness (Kyle)**

**Minutes: by Kyle Metzler**

- **Facility Construction/Renovation Projects & Property Related Issues**
  - Main Shelter:
    - Air Conditioning system / air quality update. Currently collecting quotes to repair. System is inefficient and causes condensation issues.
    - Bathroom floors / water damage project. Currently collecting quotes to repair. Tiles, grout, and subflooring are damaged and in need of repair. Water leaks through into offices below.
  - North Shelter:
    - There have not been any roadblocks for opening and sustained operations since reopening.
    - Required upgrades were completed to open shelter.
  - 731 James Street:
    - N/A - Two-year lease for space for Prevention Education signed in February 2023 is expensive, but VH has limited options to break lease per the terms of the agreement.
  - 449 East Washington Street:
    - Lease is inexpensive. VH is looking to use the space more.

- 723 James Street:
  - EMCOR Services Betlem repaired the boiler that required service. Cost was ~\$4k to make repairs.
  - Grant money from Reisman Foundation and another foundation is available to paint exterior of 723 James Street this spring.
    - Received 3 painting quotes (\$37-58k).
    - Trish met with attorney regarding grant money availability.
  - \$5.3k quote from Eastern Security Services. We are planning to move forward with this at a TBD date.
  - \$20k quote from November from Atlas Fence. 2 other quotes received. We are planning to move forward with this at a TBD date.
  - Kitchen ceiling repair quote. Ceiling mounted AC unit is in unsafe condition with wooden support beams rotted.
  - Vera House sign repair quote. Signage in rear parking lot is damaged.
  - Front door lock & reception camera. Original solid oak doors are an obstacle to installing physical security measures.
- **Property Strategy & Acquisition/Disposition**
  - There will be line items in 2024 budget for property operations and maintenance costs along with mortgage / lease expenditures. Please share details with Property Committee once budget(s) in place.
  - As the agency is on the path to regain financial stability and operating without a budget, Will has been requesting funds to make repairs on a case-by-case basis as needed. Timeliness of renovation/repair based on criticality.
  - Will and other members of the Property Committee team will be working together to collate historical maintenance and construction spend so the executive team has those insights to work with as the 2024 budget is coming together.
- **Property / Facilities Policy & Procedures**
  - N/A
- **Action Items & Next Steps**
  - The property committee will continue to meet quarterly. Our next meeting in on 6/10 will be in person and include a tour of the Vera House properties. Kyle and Will will coordinate these site visits.

**Meeting adjourned 12:51pm. Next meeting on 6/10/2024 at 12pm.**



**Finance Committee Minutes  
March 8, 2024**

**Attended:** Ms. Jones (CEO), Ms. Zanders (CFO), Ms. Petrosillo (Board Treasurer), Ms. Pengel (Board President), Ms. Coles (Member), Ms. Penson (Member)

**Excused:** No one.

**Overarching Objectives:**

- Review status/progress of 2022 Audit
- Review Agency's Monthly Financial Reports (Cash Flow, Balance Sheet, Income Statement)
- Review Annual Budget

Roles: [identify who will take which responsibility]

- a. Notetaker: Ms. Petrosillo
- b. Scheduler: Ms. Pengel
- c. Reporter: Ms. Petrosillo

1. Long term goals (>6 mos):

- a. Increase Agency cash flow via #1 Billings, #2 Fundraising and #3 Grants

2. Short term goals (within 2 months):

- a. Complete 2022 Audit
- b. Catch-up on Billings
- c. Evaluate engaging Capital CFO, an outsourced accounting & finance agency, to augment Agency resources. Ms. Jones recommends this approach and firm.

3. Action Items:

- a. Ms. Jones – Schedule Audit & Finance Committee to meet with Capital CFO, the week of March 25, 2024.
- b. Ms. Zanders
  - i. Send financial reports to Committee on Wed 3/13/24.
  - ii. Send timing of when the 2024 Budget will be ready to Committee on 3/13/24.

4. Discussion:

- a. Audit Committee
  - i. No further action by Agency on the outstanding audit items required for Grossman St. Amour.
  - ii. Auditors returning to complete the 2022 Audit has not been scheduled, due to open items above.
- b. Finance Committee
  - i. No financial reports shared with Committee.

c. Other Financial Discussion

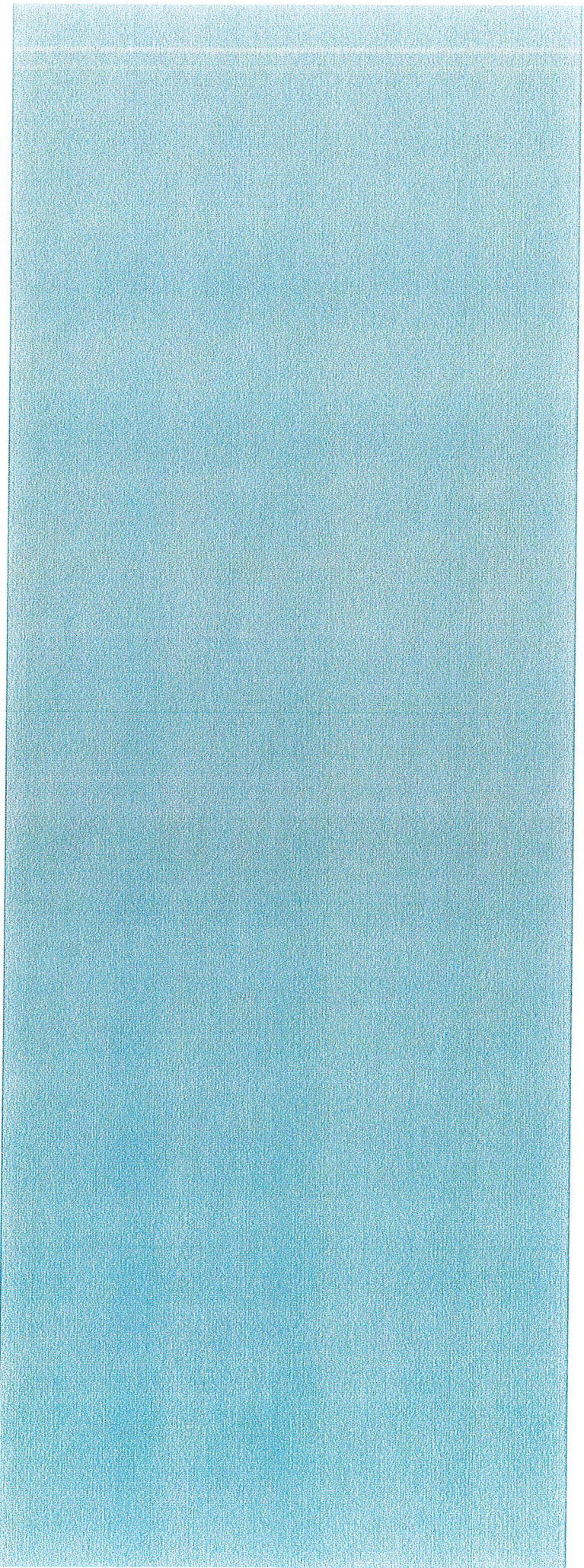
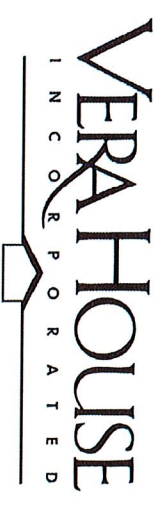
- i. We agreed to meet with Capital CFO to understand their offerings and pricing. This is at Daquetta's request. They would assist Agency with getting caught up.
- ii. Capital CFO must offer us a deliverable based SOW, which includes wrapping up the 2022 Audit.

5. Items requiring Board Approval/discussion:

- a. Nothing for the upcoming Board meeting 3/19/24

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP UPDATE**  
**MARCH 2024**



# AGENCY UPDATES -- FEBRUARY 2024 -- PART 1

## Chief Executive Office Update:

- ELT met with State Agencies/Onondaga County 2/2/24
- Met with new ED of NYSCADY, Will Rivera 2/2/24
- Met with Stephen Miliiti on 2/6/24 prospect consultant to explore: 1- Elevate Marketing and Communications; 2- Campaign/fundraising Development and 3- Board Development
- Attended United Way Black History event at Nan, CEO's guest 2/15/24
- Met with DA Warren Fitzpatrick 2/27/24. Met with Sarah Elder, introduced by board secretary on 2/6 re: swag/apparel fundraising
- Attended joint board and board of trustees meeting 2/13/24
- Participated in Emerging Adults: Victims Services System Mapping Exercise re: NYS Unified Court Services funding initiative
- Attended Gifford Foundation's Embracing Disruption Ceremony (uses Lifecycle Model to support non-profits)
- Met with Sabrina Houser, Founder/CEO, Capital CFO to explore support with Billing/Grant Writing
- Met with Legal/Advocacy/Shelter leaders re: NYS OPDV Flexible Funding Spending Grant. Contract is still with NYS OSC
- OCFs Performance Improvement Plan was closed on 2/29/24
- Submitted Directors and Officers Renewal Application 2/21/24
- Executed New York State Unified Court System (Advocacy) 10/1/23-9/30/25
- Attended PREA Tow-Day Annual Meeting in Utica hosted by CVTC Feb 29 and March 1
- Employee Survey Planning for release March 2024
- Prepared for All Staff/Agency Update Meeting -- March 7, 2024
- Met with former, ED 2/27/24
- Met with General Counsel re: Personnel Matter
- Keynote Speaker at Course Hospital's Black History's Month Celebration
- CEO/COO participated in Crime Victims Vigil Planning Committee -- Vigil scheduled for April 24th 5:30pm-6:30pm. More info to follow.

# AGENCY UPDATES -- FEBRUARY 2024 -- PART 2

## Chief Executive Officer Continued Updates:

- OOCFS Performance Improvement Plan was closed on 2/29/24
- Submitted Directors and Officers Renewal Application 2/21/24
- Executed New York State Unified Court System (Advocacy) 10/1/23-9/30/25
- Executed Onondaga County Court Alternative & Steps 10/1/23-9/30/24 Contract (CPS)
- Executed Onondaga County Court Alternatives & Steps (Parole) 1/1/24-12/31/24
- Onondaga County Advocacy & Prevention Budget & SOW 1/1/24-12/31/24 (awaiting County feedback to fully execute)
- Safe Dwelling opened Feb 2, 2024 (Met with newly elected Baldwinsville Mayor Bruce Stebbins)
- CEO/COO attended Clinical's weekly meeting
- Housing and Homeless Coalition of CNY – HUD Pre-Monitoring Visit 2/2/24
- Met with some board of directors and board of trustees
- Budget Planning / Dana created department allocations for Directors engagement in budget process
- Met with Sarah Elder introduced by Stefanie re: Apparel/Swag Fundraiser 2/6/24
- Met with Chief ADA, Jarrett Woodstock and Monira Alozaima; Victim Assistance Supervisor to establish a seamless and agreed upon referral process, which included a personalized email for OCDA office.
- CEO/COO along with Director of Advocacy and an Advocate met with Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA) re: Section 8 referrals, communication and process including two personalized emails created by Vera House and SHA.
- Elder Abuse Conference Pre-Planning / Continued White Ribbon Pre-Planning
- Met with Carrie/Jamie Crouse, DEV/MARCOM Consultant to support upcoming events

# WHAT IS NEW WITH CLINICAL TEAM 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of separate individuals served	163	176										
# sessions completed	499	387										
% safety planning	100%	100%										
# of no shows	63	40										

During the month of February one of our clinicians left the agency.

Clinical leaders are currently working to hire two full time therapists.

During February there were no clinical referrals from DCFS and one clinical referral from MMR CAC





# WHAT'S NEW WITH PREVENTION EDUCATION 2024

Metric	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOVEM	DECEMBER
# of People Reached through Prevention Education Programs	432	706										
# of Direct Service hours	16	13										
# of Vacant Positions	4	4										

**February Highlights:**

- Completed 12 Men Model training with our partners, Northside Learning Center, Good Life Youth Foundation
- Met with additional community partners to facilitate our campus programming with SUNY ESF Tabling, OCC office hours, OCC Athletes trainings; Le Moyne; Attended OVW Technical Training Institute in Atlanta, GA.
- Meeting with Onondaga Community College partners to reaffirm memorandum of understanding between the college and the agency.
- Youth Education Program: Nottingham High School; Chestnut Hill Middle School; Liverpool HS
- Direct service: Call outs, facilitating Heal and Reclaim
- Interviewing for vacant positions; Prevention Educator; Community Prevention Educator; Associate Director; Campus Prevention Educator



## **WHAT'S NEW WITH ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) PROGRAM – FEBRUARY 2024 – PART ONE**

### **General EAJ Activity – February Highlights:**

- A. Staffing – making offers to the ALL Grant Coordinator and the Outreach and Training Coordinator candidates; interviewing for the Elder Advocate; space and equipment arrangements being made.
- B. Onboarding and Staff Training – part one of Advocacy training completed with second part in March; preparing Onboarding for new hires
- C. Representation – represented VH at Senior Companion Council (IFW), Aging Services Network, DOJ meetings, and AATI planning board
- D. Grant Management – applied for a \$8K NYSOFA Grant for Outreach; preparing proposals for federal solicitations

### **ALTC-AGING Grant – February Highlights:**

- A. Elder Abuse Conference – venue, date secured, exploring themes/speakers with planning committee, preparing sponsorship marketing
- B. Elder Justice Coalition – monthly meetings convened and attended EAC Planning and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression subcommittees
- C. Evergreen Network – expanded distribution to over 400 partners, preparing March newsletter
- D. Community Outreach – planning to expand community partnerships with new Outreach Coordinator

### **OVC Expanded Community Outreach Response to Elder Abuse (ECORE) GRANT – February Highlights:**

- A. Christopher Communities – contracted and finalizing launch in March
- B. Center for Justice Innovations – contracted and finalizing launch in March
- C. Case Management – victim services continue, and plans being made for transition to new programming

## **WHAT'S NEW WITH ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) PROGRAM – FEBRUARY 2024 – PART TWO**

### OWW Abuse in Later Life (ALL) GRANT – February Highlights:

- A. Syracuse Housing Authority – contract complete, preparing training to be ready to launch in March
- B. Victim Services – the advocacy department has been addressing older client needs at this time
- C. Survivor Support Services – support group carried on with 9 continuing clients and preparing new educational components
- D. Training and Cross-Training – continued reconnecting with NCALL the OWW TTA to launch activities with new partners

### LIEESPAN Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (EMDT) Coordination for Central New York – February Highlights:

- A. Currently serving seven counties of EMDT committees
- B. Caseload of over 30 cases currently during most months
- C. Typically, 2-3 new cases in the areas of domestic violence and financial

# ALTERNATIVE STEPS 2024

## OUTCOMES FOR JANUARY 2024

Continued participants – 65

New participants – 19

Total participants (January) - 84

Total participants that completed 15 weeks - 10

•PREA BOD for the month of January 2024

•Total number of participants – 15

# WHAT'S NEW WITH HUMAN RESOURCES 2024?

## STAFFING UPDATE

- Offers/New Hires/Onboarding:
  - Legal Advocate **started** 3/4/24
  - Advocate **started** 3/4/24
  - Advocate **pending** background check 4/1/24
  - Abuse in Later Life Outreach & Training Coordinator **offer accepted**
  - HUD Housing Coordinator **offer accepted**
  - Assoc Director of Prevention Ed **2<sup>nd</sup> interviews**
- Internal Moves/Changes:
  - Advocate changed to Legal Advocate – Emerging Adults
- 2 Terminations
  - Volunteer/Intern Coordinator
  - Therapist

## INITIATIVES COMPLETED

- Celebrated Employee Appreciation Day to encourage gratitude, comradery, and employee satisfaction
- Finalized written Recruiting Process
- Cultivating “team” approach to hiring standards by partnering department heads and Human Resources
- Completed 403(b) annual census and client data reporting to prepare for 2023 year-end compliance testing and financial auditing
- Scheduled/Coordinated Q1 Agency Orientation Training (initiated by Directors)
- Continuing to develop new ADP home page with refresh of news content, employee resources, helpful links, and celebrations

# HUMAN RESOURCES PROJECT GOALS

- Agency Orientation / Regulatory Compliance Training Program for 2024
  - Orientation general session
  - New hire Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention training for all Vera House
  - Self-paced, independent learning modules
  - Certification requirements for specialized areas
- General Ledger Interface (GLI)
  - Implementation in progress to supply electronic payroll data feeds to BlackBaud to strengthen efficiency and accuracy
- Time off policy proposal for July 2024
  - Evaluate PTO structure, rollover, thresholds, & propose PTO bank
  - Utilize HR systems to automate accruals
- Staff performance review process for 2024

# FINANCE UPDATES 2024

## Staffing

### Vacant Positions

- Grants and Contracts Financial Administrator
- Senior Grants Accountant
- Staff Accountant

### State and County Fiscal Reporting Priorities

- FVPSA Core, FVPSA ARP DVPI
- OVS - BAR, Q3 and Q4
- DCJS SA, DCJS SANE
- OVW - Q3 and Q4
- County Contracts
  - Adult and Long-Term Care (County submitted in Feb – expected ETA week of March 18)
  - Adult Mental Health (submitted awaiting County approval)
  - Child and Youth Counseling (expected ETA week of March 18)
  - Child Preventative Services(expected ETA week of March 18)

# WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT 2024

## Policy and Procedures Rolled Out

1. Outside Fundraiser Guidelines & Procedures: This policy provides clear parameters for all fundraisers. This information will be added to the website for quick reference for all potential fundraising partners to review. (Copies are printed for BOD)
2. 2-Prong Donation (goods and products) Management Process and Donation (Goods and Products) Management Process (distribution) rolled out company wide. This policy provides clear communication to staff to manage and distribute donations fairly and efficiently while creating checks and balances for inventory and reconciliation. (Copies are printed for BOD)

## On the Horizon

### VH Annual Campaigns

- WRC – April 2024, planning underway
- Kick off – April 1, 2024 at CNY Comm Foundation
- EAC – June 21, 2024
- Gala/DV Campaign – Oct 19, 2024

### Community Calendar:

- Tabling at Community Resource Showcase 3/22 @Jubilee Homes – promoting WRC
- Currently Confirmed:
- 2024 Pride Parade, June 22
- Spring/Summer Events Calendar – coming soon!

### Development Needs

- Development/Marketing/Events Coordinator
- Training in Raisers Edge/Blackbaud/Greater Giving as these are the primary fundraising platforms used to support all events and all trained staff are no longer with the Org.



1. Financial Update:
  - a. Budget reflecting year to date
  - b. Cash flow
  - c. General Updates
  
2. Audit Update:
  
3. Overall Agency:
  - a. Long term goals:
  
  - b. Short term goals (within 2 months):
  
  - c. Action Items:
    - i. Agency:
    - ii. Board Support:
  
  - d. High Risk Programs:
    - i. High risk: Programs that are identified as high risk tend to have concerns that include, but are not limited to staffing, funding, quality, additional concerns related to the program.
  
4. Staffing:
  - a. Vacancies by program/area of need
  - b. Additional highlight or concern related to staffing and/or HR
  
5. Events/Activities:
  - a. Annual schedule of events/activities
  - b. Details including promotional strategy.
  - c. Include how the Board can support efforts.
  
6. Additional Discussion:
  
7. Items for Board support/approval/discussion:

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

March 14, 2024

## Contingency Strategic Planning

General discussion points and concurrent planning in response to the agency's needs and sustainability.

Action Items: Establish a five-person task-oriented committee of three (3) board members and two (2) executive leaders for bi-weekly meetings (virtual) to ensure continued progress in this process.

Objective: Establish a formal, approved contingency plan.

1. Agency as Consultant, Supportive Services Agreement
  - a. VH seeks relationship with community agency (most likely, Large) with the ability to provide identified administrative support as a consultant. Services would be invoiced and paid to the supporting agency at a negotiated and agreed upon rate.
  - b. Consultant would require access to documents, staff, and confidential information requiring a Business Associate Agreement.
  - c. Differ from individual consultants:
    - i. Demonstrates willingness to collaborate
    - ii. Establishing relationships that we may not otherwise intersect with
    - iii. Financially, typically cheaper and single stream of service
    - iv. In-kind opportunities
  - d. Action items:
    - i. Identify administrative roles
    - ii. Identify agencies with robust staff that meets capacity
2. Shared Responsibilities Agreement (Joint programming)
  - a. Enter relationship with an agency (most likely, small) that needs administrative oversight support and would benefit from shared staff and responsibilities.
  - b. VH would support another agency with administrative duties and that agency would do the same. (I.e., billing support received in exchange for social media/marketing support provided.)
  - c. Action items:
    - i. Identify roles/responsibilities that would fit
    - ii. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
3. Organization Transition/Partnership
  - a. Merger, co-brand
    - i. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs, and continues to have VH logo/branding.
    - ii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility
    - iii. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
    - iv. Mission alignment element
    - v. Action items:
      1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
      2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
  - b. Merger, brand independence
    - i. A governing body serves as a silent partner.
    - ii. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs, and continues to have VH logo/branding.
    - iii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility

- iv. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
- v. Mission alignment element
- vi. Action items:
  1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
  2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
- c. Merger, brand transition
  - i. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs
  - ii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility
  - iii. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
  - iv. Mission alignment element
  - v. Negotiations include staff retention
  - vi. Action items:
    1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
    2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
- 4. Dissolution- Last resort.
- 5. Overarching things to consider:
  - a. Financial obligations
  - b. Permissions/authorizations
  - c. Community support
  - d. Property ownership, transfer, sales, refinance options
  - e. Assets including vehicles, furniture, office supplies,
  - f. Funding opportunities for strategic planning
    - i. CNY Community Foundation
      1. Strategic Partnership Fund
        - a. Strategic Partnership Fund - Central New York Community Foundation (cnycf.org)
        - b. Applicants are encouraged to discuss intent before seeking application.
      2. Grants from the Strategic Partnership Fund support willing organizations pursuing the following:
        - a. Exploration, Pre-Negotiation, Negotiation & Due Diligence
        - b. Administrative consolidation
        - c. Joint programming
        - d. Joint venture
        - e. Regionalization
        - f. Formation of subsidiary or parent-subsidiary
        - g. Reengineering or restructuring
        - h. Mergers and consolidations
        - i. Nonprofit dissolution



## Outside Fundraiser Guidelines & Procedures

Thank you for your interest in fundraising for Vera House! To ensure a successful partnership with our agency, we request that you read and adhere to the following guidelines and procedures. These guidelines are to be used as a reference tool while you plan your event, allowing Vera House to manage fundraisers in a productive manner.

Any questions should be directed to the Director of Development.

1. Vera House's mission is to prevent, respond to, and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse. We lead the community towards the prevention of domestic abuse by providing counseling, emergency shelter, advocacy, and education throughout Onondaga County. In planning your event, please keep our vision in mind; a world free of violence and abuse.
2. Please fill out the Outside Fundraiser Proposal Form, sign, and send to our Director of Development ([info@verahouse.org](mailto:info@verahouse.org)) at least **ONE MONTH** prior to your event.
3. Use of the Vera House name and/or logo is reserved for events that receive approval by submitting the above-mentioned Outside Fundraiser Proposal Form. To use our agency name and logo to publicize your event, we ask that you commit to raising \$250.00. However, events planning to raise less than \$250.00 can use our agency name by stating "Proceeds of this event will go to Vera House."
4. All promotional materials for your event that include our agency name and/or logo must be approved before they are used or sent to the public. We ask that you include the % of net proceeds that Vera House will receive from your event on all promotional materials. All materials must be sent to the Director of Development at [info@verahouse.org](mailto:info@verahouse.org) for approval prior to printing or publishing.
5. Agreeing to host a fundraiser on our behalf implies you or your organization will be assuming responsibility for ALL costs associated with the event.
  - a. Vera House will not be responsible for staffing the event, sending and/or tracking invitations, selling tickets, or any other administrative tasks. We are thankful for your help, but we do not have enough resources to provide assistance with all these tasks.
6. How will Vera House help you?
  - a. Approved events will be uploaded to our Events Page located on our website and shared on our social media sites.
  - b. Vera House can provide agency materials at your event.
  - c. Vera House can offer to have a representative at your event to house a resource table and/or speak on our behalf. **We require a 30-day notice** (minimally) for a speaker and/or representative to be present at your event. All requests should be included on your Fundraiser Proposal Form.
7. After the conclusion of your event, you are asked to transfer monetary or material gifts to Vera House within 30 days, unless prior arrangements have been made. Checks should be made payable to Vera House, Inc. and the name of your event should be stated on the memo line. They should be mailed or dropped off at Vera House at 723 James St, Syracuse, NY 13203.

***We appreciate your generosity in helping us prevent, respond to and end domestic violence and other forms of abuse.***

***We wish you much success in your planning!***





### **Donation (Goods/Products) Management Process (acceptance)**

In order to keep the Donations (Goods and Products) managed efficiently, and inventory of items maintained, following procedure will be followed:

1. Donations are accepted and processed by a member of the Development team 9:00am-4:00pm Monday-Friday. In the event a development team member is unable to immediately accept a donation, reception can accept on behalf of Development and complete the receipt for processing. Receipt should be placed in DOD mailbox. If the items received need to be moved before a member of Development can assist, Operations/Facilities can help to move them to a secure location.
2. Donated goods are processed and placed on the appropriate shelves/storage area at 723 James.
3. Donation space is monitored daily by Development team to ensure a clean and tidy space.
4. Accepted donation items are in new/unused condition ONLY.
5. In the unlikely event we have received items that cannot be used by Vera House, those items will be sorted into: Trash/Donate forward. Examples of unusable items are: Used clothing/bedding/towels/broken or expired products. If we receive used clothing, those items will be donated forward to a partner program ie., Rescue Mission Alliance.
6. Donation Item Request Form must be completed to sign out items being used by each respective department. This will support audit and reconciliation of items that are high need as well as serve as documentation in client files, supporting distribution. A copy of the approved form must be kept in the client file, documented in the database and a copy provided to Development.
7. For safety and security purposes, clients are not allowed in the basement/donation area.
8. Development works directly with programs and services to create wish list of items, connect with partner programs in the county (Diaper Bank, Food Pantry, Mary Nelson Youth Project etc) to supplement Vera House Shelter, Programs, Services and client needs.
9. Cell phone and pre-paid cell minutes/SIM cards are managed by the Development Dept. Please complete a PO and remit to your direct supervisor for review and approval. Copies of the approved form must be kept in the client file, documented in the data base, and a copy provided to Development.
10. Gift Cards are managed by the Finance Dept. Please fill out a PO and remit to finance for review and approval accordingly.

**Broken/Damaged items that do not fit in the dumpster and need to have a coordinated pickup with Syracuse Haulers will be coordinated between Development and the facilities manager.**

## **Donation (Goods/Products) Management Process (distribution)**

1. Donations are requested for clients on behalf of the Vera House staff members/department working with them.
2. The Donation Item Request Form must be completed with all items requested listed on the form. The request form must be signed/approved by the Dept Supervisor or Director of Development. A copy of the approved form must be kept in the client's file, and a copy provided to Development. Example of item allocation per client/family located below and on the back of the Item Request Form.
3. Notes must be kept in the database and the client file to reflect all items provided to them while under the care of Vera House.

### **Quick reference to determine how many items to provide to clients:**

**Single person:** One of each item: Toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, bodywash, box of tampons/pads, shampoo, conditioner, 1 body lotion. 1 box/package of diapers, 2 packages of wipes per box of diapers.

**Families:** One of each item, per person: Toothbrush, deodorant, bodywash/bar soap, lotion.

**Clothing items:** 1 of each item that we can provide; winter gloves/hat/scarf etc.,

**Home items:** 1 box of dishes, 1 blanket per person, 1 set of sheets per bed/person, 1 pillow per person.

As there are many supportive organizations in the area, please be sure to provide a list of other resources to your client(s):

Diaper Bank: 315-400-0556

Food Pantry: Food Bank of CNY: 315-437-1899

Thrifty Shopper/Rescue Mission: multiple locations (we can provide vouchers for Rescue Mission shopping)

Department of Social Services (DSS): 315-435-2700

Mary Nelson Youth Center: 315-422-2761

Salvation Army: 315-475-1688

Catholic Charities: (food pantry) 315-424-1876

EBT/Food Stamp recipients qualify for a free cell phone: [www.truconnect.com](http://www.truconnect.com)

The Women's Economic Institute (provides women's professional attire free of charge)

By appointment only. Must call to schedule an appointment. 315-551-2500. 109 Otisco Street, Syracuse



## Donation Item Request Form

Complete this form and submit it to your supervisor for approval.  
After approval, please make a copy of this form and provide it to Development.  
Retain original for client file.

All items require approval before being distributed to clients. Please complete and attach all necessary documentation as outlined in the agency Donation policy and/or your supervisor's requirements. Please allow up to 2 business days for approval. For emergency needs, please contact your direct supervisor or Director of Development.

Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for request of item(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Special Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Client Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

### Department:

Clinical

Education

Other

Development

Volunteer

Non-client\*

Shelter

Advocacy

### List of Items:

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Supervisor Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Received by Development (initials/date) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Non-client needs are defined as people being provided with support via inventory items on a case-by-case basis. Non-client forms are completed in the same way and filed with Development.