



IT TAKES A **COMMUNITY**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2022



# Beyond Grateful

## DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS,

**In Beaufort and Jasper Counties, 50,000 households struggle to make ends meet. We must do more to move our neighbors to economic self-sufficiency.** That's no small task, but, with your help, we're confident it can be done.

It must be done.

Last year we revised and recommitted to our Path Forward – the road map to creating a community of opportunity for all – a strategic initiative informed by data and driven by people. Then we invested in those people, our neighbors, our staff, and volunteers. Our team of Red Apron Volunteers doubled in size and their roles expanded to support all of our programs and places. We broke down barriers for our adult learners and decreased annual student fees to \$20. The education team improved attendance rates by 25% by developing a new curriculum and program structure, investing in volunteer tutor training, and open and honest communication. With help from our community partners, we opened The Resource Hub, the “living room” of BSH, where the journey now starts for many of our neighbors. Our client advocates were able to work one-on-one with 168 neighbors through 674 meetings to connect to resources, develop goals, and work toward personal success.

Showing our neighbors the path is not enough, we must walk the path to self-sufficiency with them. Behind these successes and statistics, are relationships, between our volunteers, our neighbors, and our community.

Down the bumpy dirt roads, behind the doors of homes without full kitchens or working plumbing, in the bedrooms shared by a family of five, is a neighbor that can't see past tomorrow because there will not be enough in this month's budget to buy groceries.

Bluffton Self Help offers the basic needs support and education programs to empower our neighbors, the hard-working families who are simply trying to make ends meet.



The Market at Bluffton Self Help distributes 10,000 pounds of food each week to 350 households so that our neighbors do not have to skip meals to pay for other essentials like medicine, gas, childcare, and the unpredictable flat tire. Bluffton Self Help's education team supports 122 volunteer tutors to help teach language skills, citizenship, digital literacy, and GED preparation to more than 325 adult learners so that our neighbors can chase their dreams and earn a livable wage.

Our intake and client advocate team meets our neighbors where they are, listens to their stories, and empowers them to set goals and achieve them. Then we walk that path to success with our neighbors, every step of the way. Sometimes that means taking a step back, and sometimes that means walking the path for years until they finally get ahead.

Bluffton Self Help's staff and volunteers are committed to doing what it takes to help 50,000 households reach their full potential and thrive in our community.

We cannot do this work alone. Creating change takes a community. We remain deeply grateful for your compassion and partnership. Bluffton Self Help is better because of you.

Sincerely,

Doug Adamson, Chairman

Courtney Hampson, Chief Executive Officer





“50,000 households in Beaufort and Jasper County are not earning a livable wage.”



# Walking The Path

## *The Crisis*

With more neighbors economically at risk than financially secure, Bluffton Self Help is stepping in to advocate, support, and guide Lowcountry residents on their journey towards self-sufficiency.

**We can and must do more.**

## *Our Mission*

We empower and advocate for Lowcountry neighbors to improve their lives through education and training, basic needs, and guided access to a network of community resources.

## *Our Vision*

Communities where everyone has equal access to essential tools and resources to support their journey toward personal success.



*“I feel like things are finally turning around. Once you hit rock bottom it’s hard to pick yourself back up but I knew I had to for my children. My family would still be hungry and homeless if it weren’t for BSH [Bluffton Self Help].”*

— BSH NEIGHBOR

## Basic Needs

### THE CRISIS

- 50,000 households in Beaufort and Jasper County are not earning a livable wage.
- 13,950 people in Beaufort County and 2,918 people in Jasper County experience food insecurity.
- One in five children in Beaufort County and one in three children in Jasper County live in poverty.

### THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Bluffton Self Help’s basic needs programs are often the first step on one’s path to success, helping neighbors stretch their budget and meet their most critical needs. Through The Market, neighbors have weekly access to fresh, healthy food, clothing, diapers, hygiene items and special groceries for major holidays. We are stabilizing families as they work toward self-sufficiency.

- The Market
- The Clothing Closet
- Diaper Program
- Holiday Grocery Program

### 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

# 858

households received 431,428 pounds of fresh produce, dairy, eggs, meat, and nonperishable groceries enabling them to stretch their budget, have access to fresh, healthy food, and overall better health.

# 297

households shopped for 22,993 articles of gently used workwear, school uniforms, and children’s clothing to build confidence.

More than

# 330

families received groceries to prepare special holiday meals to gather around the table for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

# Education & Training

## THE CRISIS

- 27% of adults in Jasper County and 10% in Beaufort County lack a high school education.
- Simply learning English for the non-English speaking, economically at-risk, could cut the number living in poverty in half.
- 29% of people in South Carolina with less than HS diploma / GED live in poverty.

## THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Our education and training programs help adults acquire the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens. At Bluffton Self Help's four Learning & Literacy Centers, neighbors attend adult education classes, workshops and trainings, have access to computers and internet, and receive the support they need to reach their individualized goals on their path to success.

- Adult Basic Education Classes
- GED Preparation Classes, Tutoring & Testing
- English as a Second Language Classes
- Workshops, Tutoring, & Certificate Programs
- Open Computer Labs
- American Civics in preparation for U.S. Citizenship
- Educational Scholarships for higher education
- Digital Literacy Program and Classes



*“As a single mother, all I needed was someone in my corner telling me I could. Someone who believed in me. Now I know I can change my future, my daughter's future, my family's future, and even my community, all because of Bluffton Self Help.” — BSH NEIGHBOR*

## 2022, BY THE NUMBERS

# 413

Neighbors attended English as a Second Language, Citizenship, Adult Basic Education, and GED Preparation classes to improve literacy skills and empower them to improve their lives.

10 neighbors passed

# 17

GED subject tests and three neighbors earned their GED in the Fall 2022 semester.

# 86

adult learners utilized Bluffton Self Help's computer labs for computer-based learning and skill development.

# 7

scholarships were awarded by Bluffton Self Help for higher education supporting neighbors' educational attainment goals.



# Career Development

## THE CRISIS

Nearly six in 10 households in Beaufort County and three out of four in Jasper County are economically at risk. Not earning a livable wage, they are just one mishap away from a financial crisis.

## THE PATH TO SUCCESS

We empower, mentor, and advocate for individuals and families to improve their lives and livelihoods, providing one-on-one support to set and achieve individual goals. Through our career development programs, we help train and educate the Lowcountry workforce.

- Apply for Jobs & Connect with Local Employers
- Resume Building & Interview Skills
- Career Readiness Certificate Programs
- Career Planning
- Goal Development
- Guidance for Employment Transitions

## 2022, BY THE NUMBERS

# 8,692

visits to our Learning & Literacy Centers helped to provide educational opportunities and create a pathway to personal success.

# 13

neighbors earned their National Career Readiness Certificate to take the next step in their careers.

# 98

individuals received support with job searching, interview skills, and career planning to gain employment earning a livable wage.



“ I just really want to thank you for everything! For helping me through the entire process of getting registered and accepted into TCL, and for helping me find a job. Without your help and guidance, I do not believe I would've been in school right now or have a job. I also want to thank you for being patient with me, taking your time, being so kind and caring, I truly do appreciate and thank you!”

— BSH NEIGHBOR



“Thank you so much for helping me. I was in a bad place and now because of you, I feel like I can get back on my feet.” — BSH NEIGHBOR

## Resource Coordination & Collaboration

### THE CRISIS

- Neighbors who come to BSH are often facing three to five other barriers in their life at any one given time, related to income, employment, housing, food, transportation, childcare, or health.
- Studies show the more time a person spends in poverty, the harder it is to escape. After one year of living in poverty, more than half of people are eventually able to move up the income ladder. However, only 13% of those who have experienced poverty for seven years can transition out of poverty. *\*University of California, Davis.*

### THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Our Client Advocates work one-on-one with neighbors to establish and achieve long-term goals, connecting them with resources, providing emergency financial assistance, accessing our full array of programs, educating them, and empowering them to build a better life. If BSH does not offer the services neighbors need to succeed, our Client Advocates will connect them with the appropriate community resource that does.

### RESOURCES PROVIDED

**202** COMMUNITY RESOURCES + REFERRALS

**54** EMPLOYMENT/LIVABLE WAGE

**72** BENEFIT APPLICATIONS

**30** EDUCATION

**41** HOUSING

### 2022, BY THE NUMBERS

**168**

neighbors worked one-on-one with Client Advocates through 674 meetings to connect to resources, develop goals and work toward reaching personal success.

**194**

families received Emergency Financial Assistance for rent, mortgage or utilities to lessen the threat of homelessness.

# Community Programs

## THE CRISIS

- The average teacher spends \$750 of their own money every year on classroom supplies and \$500 on class snacks.
- 56% of the 22,000 students are on free and reduced lunch status in Beaufort County School District.
- 95% of Jasper County students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- Without proper nutrition, it is difficult for students to perform at an optimal level in the classroom.

## THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Throughout the year, we collaborate with community partners, local schools, and neighbors to provide various programs that provide nutrition, resources, and tools, enabling all Lowcountry neighbors to stretch their budget, experience joy and thrive.

- Fresh Xpress Program
- Education Supplies
- School Snack Programs
- Holiday Toy Shop

“I struggle all year and have to tell my kids ‘no’ all the time. Christmas is the time when they don’t count on me because Santa will come through. I am grateful for Bluffton Self Help during the holidays. It relieves some stress from my life. — BSH NEIGHBOR



## 2022, BY THE NUMBERS

# 827

Households received 58,619 pounds of free fresh produce through community Fresh Xpress events.

# 10

Bluffton schools received 11,544 teacher supplies, valued at \$28,860, to help ensure teachers have the tools to provide an exceptional education to students.

# 23,339

school snacks were donated to all 10 Bluffton schools to help children stay nourished throughout the school day and focused on education, not hunger – that is \$29,173 worth of snacks.

Joy was brought to

# 1,350

children in four counties with the distribution of 14,619 toys during the holiday season.





# Fernanda Silvera

## SUCCESS THROUGH EDUCATION

Fernanda Silveira was born and raised in Yucatán, México. In the midst of studying biology in México, Fernanda made the decision to move to the United States. Fernanda settled in Bluffton, SC in 2016. Originally, Fernanda struggled in her new home. It was a challenge to balance her personal goals and get a grasp on a completely new language. Learning a new language was tough for Fernanda as she had to change the way she thought and expressed herself in English. Fernanda was confused and afraid at times but never considered quitting.

Motivated by a love of learning, Fernanda decided to double down on her efforts to learn English. In 2017, Fernanda began taking classes to improve her English and became part of a larger community working towards the same goals. She found comfort in the classes and learned English skills, as well as the importance of giving back to the community.

As someone who came from a different country and learned English, Fernanda felt called to help others who are in the same position she was a few years back. After advancing her English skills and becoming fluent, Fernanda decided to give back by becoming a Beginner English as a Second Language volunteer tutor. Fernanda not only taught her students English skills but was also continually learning and fine-tuning her own English skills.

When asked about the most rewarding part of the tutoring experience and the students she worked with Fernanda said, “Giving others the opportunity to embrace and appreciate who they are as students and creating a classroom where they can establish and develop their talents can ultimately benefit their families and most importantly themselves.”

While Fernanda was enjoying giving back to her community, she still had individual goals for her own personal and professional development. Fernanda began taking classes through Bluffton Self Help’s GED Prep Program in order to increase her employability and achieve a long time goal of receiving her GED, fully in English. Fernanda worked diligently in her GED classes and stayed motivated with the help of her GED subject tutors. Fernanda expanded her vocabulary, studied frequently, and took responsibility for her own learning and achievement.

“Giving others the opportunity to embrace and appreciate who they are as students and creating a classroom where they can establish and develop their talents can ultimately benefit their families and most importantly themselves.”

In October of 2022, Fernanda met her ultimate goal and received her GED, which launched her career to new heights. Fernanda took on a new job at a local preschool where she is able to put her love of teaching to work and continue to give students the opportunity to grow, similar to the way she did.



# 269

volunteers donated  
18,090 hours of their  
time in 2022, valued  
at \$541,795.

## Red Apron Alliance

*It takes a community to create change.*

### RED APRON SUPPORTERS

Bluffton Self Help is here for our community because of our community. We collaborate with local businesses, nonprofits, and individuals in order to build a stronger community.

### RED APRON VOLUNTEERS

We rely on volunteers for every aspect of our mission. Some volunteers work the front lines and interact with our neighbors; others are behind the scenes supporting administration.

### 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Adamson | Chair  
Joel Taylor | Vice Chair  
Mike Ventling | Treasurer  
Ashley Feaster | Immediate Past Chair

### DIRECTORS

Don Brashears  
James Cuff  
Fred Hamilton  
Monie Hardwick  
Constance Martin-Witter  
Neil Parsons  
Linda Peterson  
Allan Schoenberger

All of our partners are recognized on our website at <https://blufftonselfhelp.org/red-apron-alliance/>



### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR Mary Lynda "ML" Bianchi

ML was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year for her dedicated service to our Community Programs.

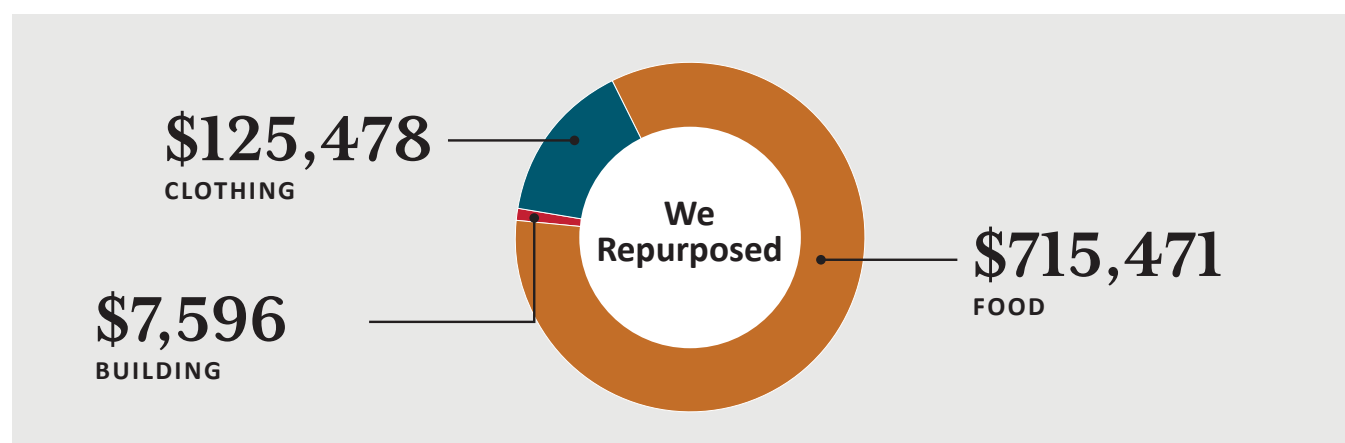
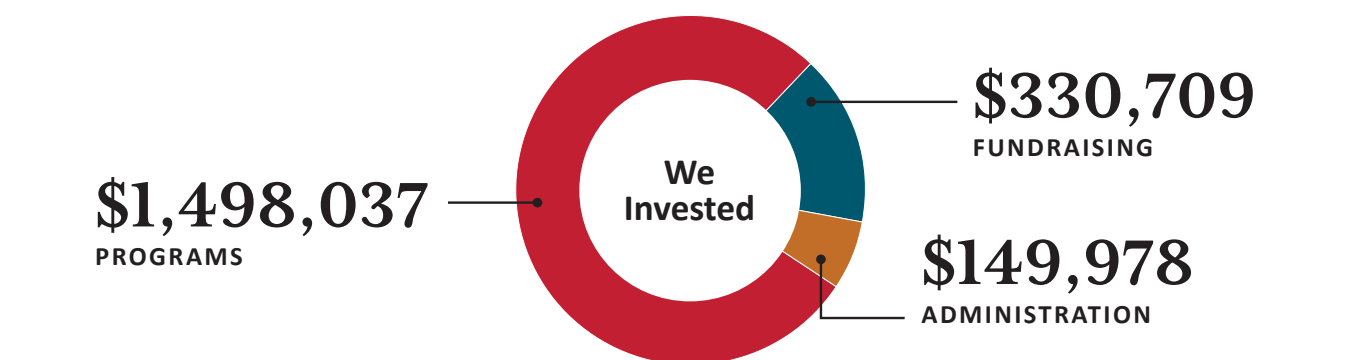
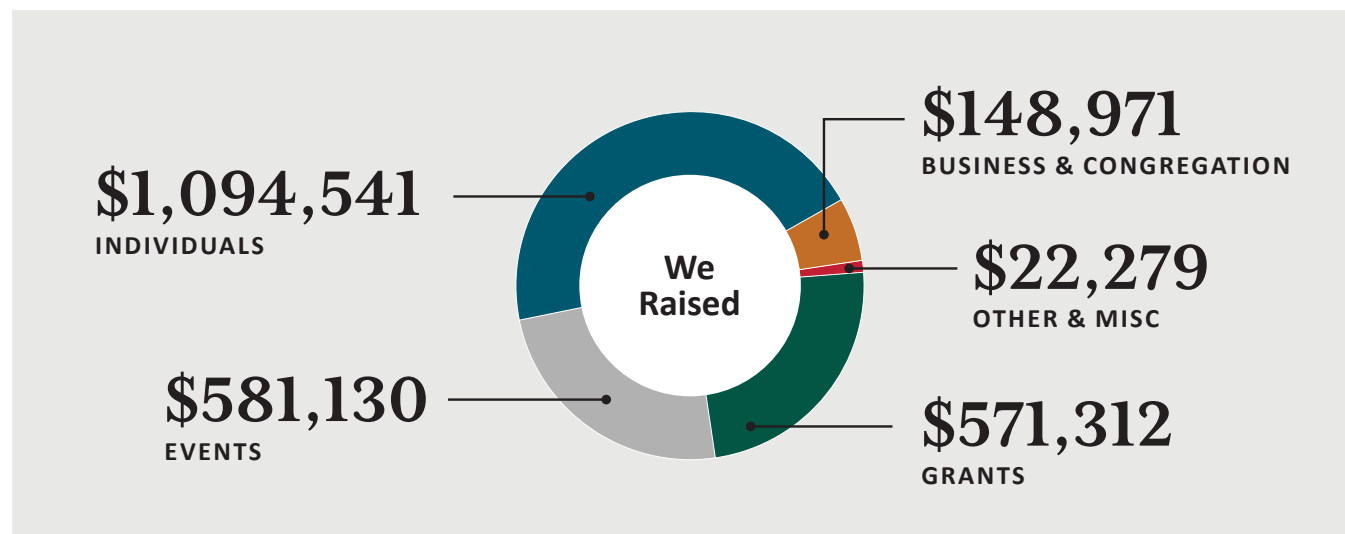
### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT AWARD David Williams

David was recognized as the Tutor of the Year for his passion to help others learn.



# Financials

Because of the kindness and generosity of our community, we were able to empower more, educate more, and change more lives than ever before. **It takes a community to create change.**





# Connect with us

**GET INVOLVED** | Now is the time to invest in our community.  
Please visit our website to learn how you can help our  
neighbors be successful in the home, workplace, and community.

**WWW.BLUFFTONSELFHELP.ORG**

**MAILING ADDRESS** | PO Box 2420 Bluffton, SC 29910  
**PHONE** | 843-757-8000

## **BLUFFTON SELF HELP HEADQUARTERS, THE RESOURCE HUB & THE MARKET**

39 Sheridan Park Circle, Suite #9 & #10 | **Bluffton**, SC 29910 | 843-757-8000

## **LITERACY & LEARNING CENTERS**

39 Sheridan Park Circle Suite #1 | **Bluffton**, SC 29910 | 843-757-8852

30 Main Street | **Hardeeville**, SC 29927 | 843-368-0431

1 Kitties Landing Way #B | **Bluffton**, SC 29910 | 843-815-6616

4 Oak Park Drive | **Hilton Head Island**, SC 29926 | 843-681-6655

