



2023-24 Impact Report

The Gesher Mosaic was made by Creative Expressions Program participants from the Choices program during classes led by College for Creative Studies Community Arts Partnership teaching artist, Skylar Turner.

At Gesher Human Services, we're deeply committed to meeting people where they are and providing the support they need.

Whether it's offering comprehensive employment assistance or helping navigate the unique challenges of developmental disabilities and mental illness, our mission remains resolute.

Please know how deeply grateful I am for your commitment to Gesher Human Services. Your support, whether through financial contributions or your presence at our events, has been instrumental in helping us fulfill our mission and make a profound impact on our community.

Our work is a vital lifeline for families facing these challenges. Recently, one of our janitors received a \$40,000 bill or Social Security overpayments. With the help of our Benefits Navigator, it was discovered that the overpayment was due to a Social Security Administration error. The Navigator stepped in, provided the necessary paperwork, and not only was the bill eliminated, but the janitor may now be owed back payments from Social Security. Stories like this are why Gesher continues to focus on providing access to crucial entitlements.

None of the work we do would be possible without your generosity and support, which allow us to be a beacon of hope and opportunity for individuals and families throughout Metro Detroit – *at work, at home, and in the community. Together, we are making real, tangible differences in the lives of those facing employment challenges, mental health issues, and developmental disabilities.*

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff and Board of Directors. Your unwavering dedication and leadership have been the driving force behind the incredible milestones we've achieved this year. Together, we successfully launched Gesher's first strategic plan, expanded initiatives like Oakland80, opened the new Lois and Milton Y. Zussman Center, and enhanced the human service field through innovative programming and internships.

I'd like to especially acknowledge our outgoing *Board Chair, Kristen Gross*, for her remarkable leadership. Kristen has guided our organization through significant challenges, particularly in addressing the growing mental health needs within our community. Her dedication to supporting those with persistent and severe mental illness has been nothing short of inspiring.

Thank you once again for your steadfast support, dedication, and belief in Gesher's mission. We look forward to continuing this important work together and making a lasting difference in our community.

Your partnership is invaluable, and we're excited about the journey ahead as we collaborate to empower those we serve.




Paul J Blatt
President and
Chief Executive Officer




Kristen Gross
Chair
Gesher Board of Directors

As my tenure as Chair of the Gesher Human Services Board of Directors wound to a close at the end of June, I spent a lot of time thinking about gratitude.

I am filled with profound gratitude for each of you and your dedicated support during Gesher's first 2.5 years. Your generosity has been instrumental in enabling us to fulfill our mission and make a meaningful impact in our community. Whether through financial donations, volunteerism, or advocacy efforts, your contributions have helped us achieve remarkable milestones – such as *providing services to 32,943 of our friends, family, and neighbors* – up nearly 20,000 since Gesher's founding.

I am very grateful and humbled to have served as the inaugural Chair of this amazing organization, and I am delighted that *Dani Gillman* has assumed the role of Board Chair. She brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to those we serve. I am confident that, under her leadership, Gesher will continue to thrive and its impact in our community.

As I pass the torch to Dani, I am also deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served alongside such dedicated souls. Your commitment to our mission and the communities we serve is truly inspiring. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Gesher's staff, leadership, and Board of Directors for their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts over the past two years.

Together, we have achieved significant milestones and navigated challenges with resilience and determination, including the creation of Gesher's first strategic plan. Our collective impact has been profound, and I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished together.

Thank you once again for your steadfast support, commitment, and belief in Gesher's mission. I am eager to witness the organization's continued success under Dani's capable leadership.



Omari Brown



Expanding Employer Partnerships

We engaged 311 employers to create meaningful opportunities for Gesher participants, expanding our network and enhancing job placement prospects.

Overcoming Challenges, Embracing Success

Omari Brown's journey with *Gesher Human Services' Vocational Services* department has been a testament to resilience and determination in the face of significant challenges. Despite initial obstacles, Omari remained steadfast, dedicating years to honing his skills at the clothing store, FKO Kids while preparing for the next step in his career.

When the opportunity arose to join the Banquets Department at Saint John's Resort as a janitor, Omari embraced the chance wholeheartedly. Transitioning to this new role posed challenges, but with the essential support from his enhanced staffing team, Omari quickly adapted and excelled. His commitment and diligent work ethic set him apart, earning him respect among his colleagues.

At *Saint John's Resort, Gesher's 2024 Employer of the Year*, Omari approaches his responsibilities with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication. His warm spirit and genuine kindness leave a lasting impression on everyone with whom he interacts, further enhancing the workplace environment. Omari's perseverance has paid off significantly over time.

As he grew more proficient in his role, his confidence soared, allowing him to achieve independence from his one-on-one support staff. Omari's success story serves as a powerful example of how dedication, resilience, and belief in one's potential can lead to remarkable achievements.

His journey underscores the importance of support and perseverance in overcoming challenges and achieving personal and professional growth.

Today, Omari continues to thrive in his role at Saint John's Resort, embodying the transformative power of opportunity and the human spirit.

Jacob Berman



Supporting Accessibility for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

All participants in our Choices program expressed complete satisfaction with our day programming, underscoring our commitment to inclusive, high-quality services.

An Artist and Advocate in Metro Detroit

Jacob Berman is an active contributor to *Gesher's Choices and Creative Expressions* programs, where he has embraced the person-centered planning process and is active in the metro Detroit community.

As an exceptional artist and an advocate for his community, Jacob's dedication to his craft and his fellow participants is truly inspiring. Jacob was recently awarded the *Dan Moran Award for Inclusion and Advocacy* from *Oakland Community Health Network*.

Jacob consistently participates in Gesher's Creative Expressions program, where he has blossomed as an artist. Recently, he designed clothing for and modeled in the Choices program's fashion show and had his art displayed for sale at one of the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Neighborhood Concert Series*.

His paintings often reflect themes of peace and mutual support. With Gesher, he visits various cultural institutions, including the *Detroit Institute of Art* and *The College for Creative Studies*. Jacob also participates in a drum circle, paints en plein air (the act of painting outdoors with the artist's subject in full view) whenever possible, and volunteers at a local food pantry twice a week.

Beyond his artistic contributions, Jacob is a dedicated advocate for his fellow participants. He helps make decisions in the program space and serves on Gesher's Participant Advisory Board, the Consumer Power Initiative. Additionally, he is an active participant representative on the Diem Building's Safety Committee, bringing suggestions and feedback at monthly meetings on behalf of the participants.

Jacob's involvement in these diverse activities showcases his commitment to enhancing both his community and well-being of those around him.

Niecy Mohammed



A New Chapter After Retirement

After 26 years of dedicated service, Niecy Mohammed faced an unexpected career transition when the pandemic led to the closure of the nonprofit organization where she worked. Embracing retirement at 66, Niecy spent three years enjoying her newfound freedom before deciding it was time for a new challenge.

However, re-entering the workforce presented its own challenges until she discovered Gesher Human Services and its *Women to Work* program. With a vibrant job market and robust support system, Niecy found the perfect opportunity to embark on a new chapter.

Now, Niecy thrives in her role as an administrative assistant at Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, an organization dedicated to providing housing for seniors. This experience has been deeply fulfilling for her, and she encourages others in similar situations to maintain a positive and open-minded outlook.

Despite initial uncertainties, Niecy found solidarity and support among peers at Gesher who, like her, were seasoned professionals eager to re-enter the workforce.

Niecy's journey with Gesher began in January 2024 when a local news station highlighted the impactful work of the Women to Work program. Designed specifically to assist women re-entering the workforce, the program provided Niecy with essential resources and a supportive community that empowered her to succeed in her new role.

Niecy found solidarity and support among peers at Gesher who, like her, were seasoned professional eager to re-enter the workforce.

Job Placement Achievements

This year, 135 Career Services participants successfully secured employment, benefiting from our tailored support and guidance.

Felice Nida



A Story of Independence and Growth

Felice Nida's journey with Gesher is one of both independence and community. Encouraged by her mother to live in a Gesher group home, Felice moved into the Victor home three years ago, where she has since embraced the support it provides.

Among the many Gesher services she benefits from, the *Clubhouse for the Common Good* stands out as a welcoming community hub designed by and for individuals with a mental health diagnosis. The Clubhouse's recent move to a larger, brighter location has been a highlight for Felice, contributing to a healthier lifestyle for her and other members.

As a resident in the Victor home, Felice values her independence, enjoying solitude and following a structured routine that includes learning economics, foreign relations, and philosophy – and where mutual respect allows for peaceful coexistence.

Additionally, Gesher has introduced her to the piano through its *Creative Expressions* program, a new skill she is eagerly trying to master.

Gesher has become more than just a support system for Felice—it's a second family. The daily routine of going to the Clubhouse, surrounded by familiar faces, has created a comforting sense of community.

And, as it continues to grow, Felice hopes it will always retain the close-knit atmosphere that makes it feel like home.

Residential Participant Stability

96% of our residential participants did not require hospitalization, indicating the success of our residential programs in maintaining participant stability and health.

As a resident in the Victor home, Felice values her independence and follows a structured routine, where mutual respect allows for peaceful coexistence.



Gesher Human Services' Lois and Milton Y. Zussman Center has a new home!

Our new 8,676-square-foot space is designed by and for individuals with mental health diagnoses. Located at 23800 W. Ten Mile Road in Southfield, Michigan, it houses the Creative Expressions program and Clubhouse for the Common Good.

Our *Creative Expressions* program provides education, enrichment, cultural experiences, and professional arts opportunities for Gesher participants. This program collaborates with community partners to offer a wide variety of art-based classes and activities that include visual and performing arts, photography, sculpting, writing, poetry, and more. Participants often uncover new talents and create their own journeys based on their interests. Creative Expressions also assists in further honing participant skills, showing their work in galleries, performances, and developing entrepreneurs, if desired.

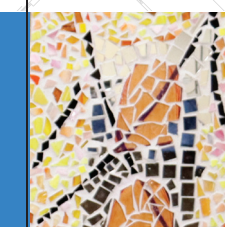
Clubhouse for the Common Good provides a setting based on the standards outlined by Clubhouse International. It was designed by and for individuals with a mental health diagnosis who seek a welcoming and engaging community atmosphere where they can enjoy social and cultural activities, educational classes, culinary experiences, vocational support, and volunteer opportunities.

The new location is nearly double the size of our old space and allows us to:

- Have a large dedicated outdoor space to support our Horticultural unit
- Have space for our wellness and fitness area, a clerical space for clubhouse units, and a dedicated, larger space near the entrance to continue our hydroponics
- Have ample storage and an expanded counter space conducive to a teaching kitchen with a significantly larger kitchen
- Foster new opportunities for our business and education unit in the surrounding community with a conference room near the entrance, flanked by a dedicated space
- Give our Creative Expressions program its own dedicated studio space, conveniently located in the same building as the Clubhouse, further enhancing our ability to support collaboration and creativity

... a 8,676-square-foot hive of activity where members collaborate, create, communicate, and contribute to the community.

GESHER
HUMAN SERVICES



GESHER

HUMAN SERVICES

The bridge to where you want to be.

Gesher Human Services is proud to have impacted the lives of **32,943 individuals** across **Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and St. Clair** counties this year.

Through our diverse and comprehensive programs, we have empowered participants, enhanced communities, and fostered positive change – **at work, at home, and in the community.**

Gesher job placements generated significant economic benefits, adding \$12,165,354 in FICA contributions, \$5,889,551 in state taxes, and \$18,339,008 in federal taxes.

In total, \$36,393,913 was added to federal, state, and FICA taxes, demonstrating the substantial impact of our employment services.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF JOB PLACEMENTS

EMPOWERING FINANCIAL LITERACY

This year, 411 participants received financial education services, with 100% of participants reporting that these services were instrumental in preparing them for home ownership.

SUPPORTING MENTAL WELL-BEING

We offered 402 therapy sessions to people living with mental health conditions, offering vital support and promoting their mental health and recovery.

BUILDING JEWISH COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We proudly engaged 244 young Jewish professionals in our NextWork Networking Events, fostering essential connections and professional growth.



CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF JEWISH LEADERS

During Summer 2023, a total of 15 Jewish college students across 9 different Jewish agencies, actively participated in our JOIN program, enriching their college experience through community engagement and leadership development.



An impressive **92% of Vocational Rehabilitation participants and 100% of employers reported satisfaction with the services provided, reflecting the effectiveness and value of our programs.**

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SATISFACTION

RESUME BUILDING EXPERTISE

Our dedicated Gesher staff assisted in creating or updating 421 resumes, helping participants present their best selves to potential employers.

PERSONALIZED CAREER COUNSELING

261 participants received one-on-one career counseling, benefiting from personalized advice and strategic career planning.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

This year, 213 people with disabilities successfully secured employment, demonstrating the success of our targeted support and guidance.

COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

96% of our files were fully compliant with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and funding source standards, ensuring the highest level of quality and adherence to regulatory requirements.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SKILL BUILDING

366 metro Detroit residents with disabilities participated in our pre-employment workshops, equipping them with essential skills and confidence to enter the workforce.



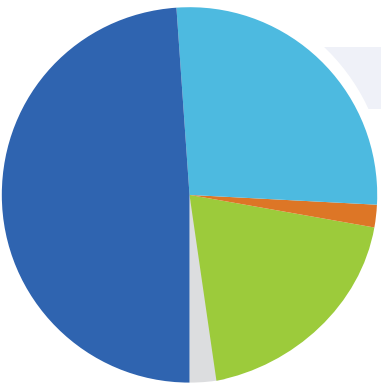
Every care partner involved in our **Dorothy and Peter Brown Jewish Community Adult Day Program** reported that the services had **a positive effect on their well-being**, highlighting the holistic benefits of our support.

POSITIVE IMPACT ON ADULT DAY PROGRAM CARE PARTNERS

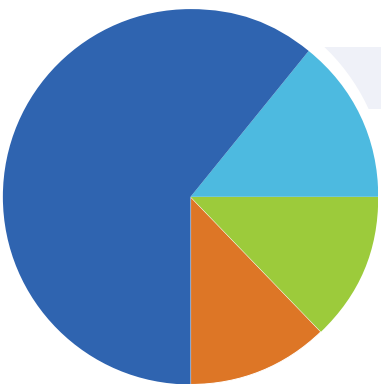


With a network of more than **450 employees and volunteers** across more than **30 locations** in southeast Michigan, Gesher delivers a continuum of services and support that directly impacts the lives of nearly **33,000 individuals and families annually.**

2024 Operational Financial Statement



SOURCES OF SUPPORT		\$ 29,543,118
Program Revenue	48%	
Service Fees	28%	
Special Events	2%	
Philanthropic Support and Investment Returns	20%	
Miscellaneous	2%	
TOTAL SUPPORT	100%	



PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS		\$ 28,673,886
At Work	60%	
At Home	15%	
In the Community	13%	
Miscellaneous Initiatives	12%	
TOTAL SUPPORT	100%	

Gesher Human Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping people across metro Detroit lead more stable and fulfilling lives through career development, behavioral health, and residential services that strengthen our community by strengthening the individual.

Public and Foundation Partners

- | | |
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| Artichoke Garlic Foundation | Maxwell Jospey Foundation |
| Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust | Michigan Health Endowment Fund |
| Byron and Dorothy Gerson Centennial Innovation Fund | Michigan Rehabilitation Services |
| Clarence and Jack Himmel Foundation | Myron P. Leven Foundation |
| Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan | NJHSA - Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies |
| DeRoy Testamentary Foundation | Oakland Community Health Network |
| Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation | Oakland County Michigan Works! |
| Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network | ORT America Michigan Region |
| Donald R. and Esther Simon Foundation | Phillip and Elizabeth Filmer Memorial Charitable Trust |
| Elaine Stern Foundation | PNC Foundation |
| Ethel Hyman and Rose Kaplan Foundation | Ravitz Foundation |
| Jewish Federation of Detroit | SourceAmerica |
| Jewish Women's Foundation | State of Michigan |
| JPMorgan Chase & Co. Force for Good | Stone Foundation of Michigan |
| | The Jewish Fund |
| | The Jewish Fund Teen Board |
| | United Jewish Foundation of Detroit |

We are thankful to all our donors, funders, and partners. Scan the QR code for a complete list.



We partner with public and private organizations that share in our vision and advance our common cause



Gesher Human Services is funded in part by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and is proud to be a partner agency of the Federation.



GESHER

HUMAN SERVICES



MISSION

Gesher Human Services is a bridge to hope and opportunity for people at work, at home, and in the community. Gesher's workforce development, behavioral health, and inclusion programming serves all Metro Detroiters while meeting the needs of the Jewish community.



VISION

A world where each person will have the tools to cross life's bridges and realize their potential.



VALUES

People First | Integrity | Kindness
Forward Thinking

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Paul Blatt
President
Chief Executive Officer



James Willis
Executive Vice President
Chief Operating Officer



Eric Adelman
Executive Vice President
Chief Advancement Officer



Marie Sickon-Burke
Chief Financial Officer



Jane Brumer-Cullen
Chief Human Resources Officer

2023-24 BOARD OR DIRECTORS

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Dani Gillman
Chair-Elect

Evan Leibhan
Anne Mendelson
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Barbara Bressack
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Eva Shapiro
Treasurer

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Yoni Torgow
Adele Weisler

*The bridge to where you want to be ...
at work, at home, and in the community.*



Gesher Human Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping people across metro Detroit lead more stable and fulfilling lives through career development, behavioral health, and residential services that strengthen our community by strengthening the individual.

Bringing together two of Detroit's most influential Jewish human services agencies, JVS Human Services and Kadima, Gesher draws on over 110 years of combined experience to facilitate equitable employment opportunities and enhance mental health outcomes for local residents.

With a network of more than 450 employees and volunteers across more than 30 locations in southeast Michigan, Gesher delivers a continuum of services and support that directly impacts the lives of nearly 33,000 individuals and families annually.





Scan the QR code for a downloadable version of this Impact Report.

OAKLAND COUNTY

Rose & Sidney Diem Building
29699 Southfield Road
Southfield, MI 48076
p 248.559.5000

Lois and Milton Y. Zussman Center
23800 W. 10 Mile Road | #140
Southfield, MI 48033
p 248.233.4325

Waterford Michigan Works!
Career Center
7500 Highland Road
Waterford, MI 48327
p 248.617.3600

Oakland80
7380 Highland Road
Waterford, MI 48327
p 888.559.4360

MACOMB COUNTY

Macomb Office
12434 E. 12 Mile Road #103
Warren, MI 48093
p 586.294.5890

Warren Michigan Works! Career
Center
30500 Van Dyke Avenue
Warren, MI 48093
p 586.574.2170

Roseville Michigan Works! Career
Center
15950 E. 12 Mile Road #100
Roseville, MI 48066
p 586.447.9200

Clinton Twp Michigan Works! Career
Center
43630 Hayes Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
p 586.263.1501

WAYNE COUNTY

Arnold E. Frank Building
4250 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48201
p 313.833.8100

Collingwood Detroit At Work
Career Center
2470 Collingwood Street
Detroit, MI 48206
p 313.962.9675

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

Port Huron Michigan Works!
Career Center
100 McMorran Boulevard
Port Huron, MI 48060
p 810.966.330

