



META HOUSE

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

45 Years

A legacy of empowering
women and rebuilding
Milwaukee families.

Meta House is dedicated to helping women reclaim their lives from the effects of substance abuse.

Through advocacy, treatment and other services that meet the unique needs of women, they gain the hope and confidence to change.

DEAR FRIENDS,

This year, Meta House celebrates its 45th year of helping women reclaim their lives from alcohol and drug addiction. This is an amazing milestone for an organization that was founded on the premise that women struggling with alcoholism could make a far greater impact on their communities in recovery than by being incarcerated.

The philosophy that guided the founders of Meta House still holds true today. Substance-abusing women – many of whom survived extraordinary and unimaginable circumstances of childhood abuse – deserve a second chance.



Meta House staff work tirelessly to provide the tools needed for women and children to succeed. Most of the women come with heartbreaking stories that transform into journeys of inspiration. Indeed, over the years, our clients have played a significant role in helping us understand the ever-changing needs of women in recovery. We have by expanding our program and services to meet those needs. When I became executive director 25 years ago, Meta House operated on a budget of \$110,000. Today, we are a multi-million dollar agency and a national model for gender-specific treatment.

In this year's report, you will see that comprehensive treatment – such as the services offered at Meta House – is not only a practical antidote to the social implications of widespread substance abuse; it is a viable solution to the financial demands placed on systems of care and justice. Put simply, supporting treatment means that more babies are born drug-free, children are cared for by their mothers instead of the child welfare system and women contribute, rather than, take from their communities.

It has been said that with age, comes wisdom. Both financial and programmatic experiences have served Meta House well since it opened in 1963. The lessons have been a humbling part of our growth – progress that would not have been possible without your support over the years. Thank you for your commitment to our mission and the work we do on behalf of our women and children.

Francine Feinberg

Francine Feinberg
Psy.D., LCSW
Executive Director



DEAR SUPPORTER,

As board president, I would like to congratulate Meta House on 45 years of providing first-class service to some of the most vulnerable citizens of our community!

I became involved with Meta House six years ago because I saw how it helped women who were broken and highly stigmatized create something special again in their lives. The story of Pat, a Meta House graduate, continues to inspire me. She started using drugs at age 14 after enduring long-term sexual abuse by a babysitter. Today, she is a loving mother and grandmother. She has a stable job and has been in recovery for nearly 10 years.



Pat's journey is one of hundreds that speak to the significance of organizations like Meta House, which is even more essential to our community during these challenging economic times. While the financial downturn has affected all of us in some way, we know the consequences are even greater for those less fortunate.

I feel privileged to be connected to an organization that women in our community view as a safe haven and a place of rebirth for them and their children. Meta House is able to address one of our community's most pressing issues by using fiscally-responsible strategies and a sound and unique approach to alcohol and drug addiction treatment for women.

I applaud the Meta House staff, board of directors, and volunteers for years of commitment and service to rebuilding our community. I hope you will join me in supporting this agency as long as our community and families need them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Bartolotta".

Jennifer Bartolotta
**President, Meta House
Board of Directors**

"When I began at Meta House, we were able to serve just twelve women living in two houses on Farwell Avenue. While the structures, fashions and technologic innovations have changed significantly in a quarter of a century, the mission of Meta House...has remained true throughout the years. We never give up on our clients, for 'once a Meta woman, always a Meta woman'."

— CAROLE MCFARLIN

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SINCE 1985



Meta House opens in **1963** with seven beds in a house on State Street purchased from Meta Orth. The purpose was to give women struggling with alcoholism an alternative to jail.

WOMEN

Women who are addicted to alcohol or other drugs are some of the most stigmatized people in our society. Stereotypes and stigma conspire to dehumanize the women we serve.

Although each individual woman who is served by Meta House has a unique experience that has brought her to our doors, many clients share characteristics.

UPON ADMITTANCE TO META HOUSE,
A WOMAN TYPICALLY:

**IS LIVING IN POVERTY • HAS A HISTORY OF SEXUAL,
PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE • LACKS AN
EDUCATION AND DOES NOT HAVE A HIGH
SCHOOL DIPLOMA • IS A SINGLE PARENT •
IS UNEMPLOYED • EXPERIENCES MID TO
HIGH SEVERITY PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

CHILDREN

Addiction to alcohol or other drugs has a negative impact on an individual's ability to parent. Consequently, children need comprehensive services. Pregnant, postpartum and parenting women are prioritized at Meta House - one of the only programs in the state that allows children to live with their mother's while they are in residential treatment.

FAMILIES AT META HOUSE ARE PROVIDED WITH:

**PARENTING EDUCATION, COACHING AND CHILD
DEVELOPMENT CLASSES • FACILITATED INTERACTION
BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD • COORDINATION OF
PRE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL CARE • ADOLESCENT/
TEEN PREGNANCY, STD/HIV, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION GROUP • INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, CHILD,
PLAY AND ART THERAPY**

"The Meta House program for youth gives me a place to go where I know I can be myself and people won't judge me. That's important because you can't just talk to anybody about what you're going through. At Meta Girls, we talk about drugs and what they can do to you."

— JAMARA, 12

DAUGHTER OF A META
HOUSE GRADUATE



Meta House purchases two houses on North Farewell Avenue to expand its residential program and treatment services to address other forms of substance abuse. In 1985, Meta House purchases a house on Maryland Avenue that has room for eight beds.



TREATMENT SETTINGS

Meta House offers three unique treatment settings to provide a continuum of care that addresses distinct levels of a woman's journey through the recovery process. Those programs include:

- **RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM** for women who need 24-hour care and benefit from a supportive living environment
- **OUTPATIENT PROGRAM** for women who need intensive support but are not in need of the 24-hour structure of the residential program
- **META HOUSING PROGRAM** for women who have successfully begun recovery and are ready for independent living, with supportive services



"I started working at Meta House's residential program when it first opened. The experience was amazing. The women were so grateful to be in a residential treatment setting because they could have their children with them. Many of them stated they would have never received help with their addiction had there been no Meta House."

— HAZEL LUTER

MANAGER OF CASE MANAGERS, SINCE 1987

In **1987**, Meta House purchases the former St. Casimir's convent on Bremen Street and adds 30 beds to its residential program. It becomes one of the first residential treatment centers in the nation to allow children to live with their mothers.

SERVICES

Each of these services is offered in our treatment settings.

AODA (ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG) TREATMENT SERVICES • CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES • CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES • VOCATIONAL/ EDUCATIONAL SERVICES • MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES • TRAUMA RESOLUTION

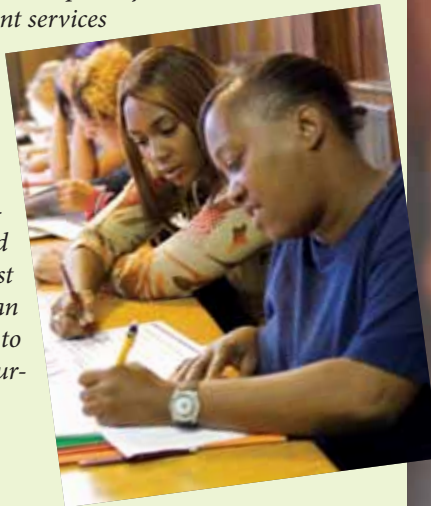


“Since I started working here in 1995, we have greatly expanded our services in mental health, especially trauma services. We have full case management services for each woman and child.

We have a higher staff to client ratio and we have a full array of services just for children. What makes us so special is that we use a holistic approach to services and always think about the best interests of our clients. It’s an incredible place to be able to work. Staff is cared for, nurtured and respected.”

— CHRISTINE ULLSTRUP

DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, SINCE 1995





“These people take you off the streets but they don’t treat you like you’re a drug addict. They treated me like I was a normal person...like a human being. I wasn’t just a client. It felt like family to me.”

— KENYATTA
META HOUSE
GRADUATE

2008 OUTCOMES AND PROGRAM RESULTS

311 women and **165** children served

1,534 supervised visits for **207** children not in their mother’s care

28 babies born

90,000+ hours of service provided for clients & their children

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM

97% discharged to a drug-free location

64% who were not disabled were employed, in a job training program or receiving monetary assistances from W-2

98% had not been arrested within the last 30 days prior to discharge

100% who participated in child play therapy increased their parental role/functioning with at least one child

Between **1999** and **2003**, Meta House purchases an apartment building on West Locust Street and builds three new buildings on North First Street as part of its Meta House Program.



Kenyatta's Story

Using drugs never crossed Kenyatta's mind until that day in 2005 when she saw her then boyfriend do it.

"I tried it and instantly I was hooked," said Kenyatta who noted that she learned about her now ex-boyfriend's addiction to cocaine two years into their relationship. After trying cocaine, she thought she could control her use. But within a year, Kenyatta said, "I lost my apartment. I wasn't paying rent and my daughter and I were sitting in the dark because I had not paid the light bill."

Kenyatta tried desperately to keep her addiction from her mother and then 11-year-old daughter, Brenee. Months later, a friend exposed her secret.

"That was a day I will never forget," Kenyatta said. "My mother grabbed my arm and my daughter was looking to see if it was true that her mom was using drugs. My mom later told me, that night she and my daughter stayed up and cried the whole night. That was also the toughest school year for my daughter."

Kenyatta struggled to stay safe from men who expected sex for drugs and toiled over the pain she was causing her mother and daughter. In 2007, she served 8 months in jail for bad checks and violating parole.

When Kenyatta arrived at Meta House, she was three months pregnant. She had a pillowcase full of soiled clothing and had not eaten a solid meal in days.

"I received a ride from a stranger to Meta House's residential program," Kenyatta said. "When I walked on the porch, I asked God to take this monkey off my back. And when I stepped in the house, it was the freshest breath of air I had in a long time."

Meta House staff helped Kenyatta give birth to a drug-free, health baby boy in March 2008.

"I call him my miracle," Kenyatta said of her son, Brendan. "I look at him everyday and see how smart he is. It could have been so different."



At Meta House, Kenyatta attended treatment and counseling groups. She also participated in parenting classes and life skills sessions. Meta House also connected Kenyatta to a child therapist to work on her relationship with her daughter Brenee who participated in Meta Girls, a program for at-risk teen girls. Kenyatta said the program gave Brenee "the opportunity to know that she's not the only teen going through this."

Kenyatta recently graduated from the Meta House Program and moved into her own apartment with her children. She works for an assembly company but plans to go back to school for medical coding and billing. Brenee, now 14, is now doing well in school.

"Meta House is the best thing that ever happened to me in my addiction. I am going to always be a Meta woman. I am living again."

Toni's Story

As long as Toni can remember, alcohol was always a part of her life. Social holidays. Family gatherings. It had a glamorous appeal to her as a small child.

But as a young adult, alcohol became a way for Toni to deal with the anxiety and emotional anguish she carried from her childhood. At age 8, Toni was molested by a friend's father during a sleepover and her older brother began acting out sexually towards her when she was 16. Her mother died from a car accident four years later. Toni struggled to console her dad who was driving the vehicle.

"He wouldn't sleep at night and would have nightmares," Toni said. "My father suffered from survivor's guilt so I would drink with him. He used it as a coping mechanism. I used it as an escape."

Toni moved from her small Iowa hometown to Wisconsin in 1990 for her job with a major corporate company. She was a technical writer and trainer, but the transition to a bigger town was difficult. Toni's addiction to alcohol progressed.

"I had never driven on a freeway before," Toni said. "I didn't know anyone and people made fun of the way I would speak. That's when I started stopping at the liquor store on the way home and drinking until I passed out. I would wake up and go to work the next morning and do it all over again. That was my life for a long time."

One morning, Toni realized she needed help. She confided in her supervisor who arranged for her to attend a 30-day treatment program. Still, she felt her image, as a woman and employee, was tarnished. She relapsed after a year and went through a series of detox programs, experienced her father's death, the loss of her job and the threat of going to jail for driving while under the influence.

"I pretty much decided that I was going to drink myself to death," Toni said. Faced with possible jail time, Toni was referred to Meta House's residential program in 1999.

"It was a very humbling experience, but being in Meta House was the best thing that ever happened



to me," Toni said. "Before, I wasn't being given the treatment that I needed, which was to: 1) stay for a long period of time and 2) have a case manager and counselor. Meta House was the total package."

Meta House staff guided Toni through the legal process. She served six months in a correctional facility for her traffic violations. She participated in the Meta Housing program and began working as an administrative assistant at a local university. She worked for five years until she underwent a double lung transplant in May 2006.

Toni, 54, has been in recovery for six years. She is doing well and concentrating on her physical health. She is an active member of her church and lives with her fiancé.

"I feel great," Toni said. "Life in recovery gives you little things to celebrate. I am so happy."

“United Way of Greater Milwaukee has been a proud supporter of Meta House since 1973. This groundbreaking, unique treatment program has been a cornerstone of our social services community, lifting up women and children for 45 years with evidence-based intervention strategies –strategies that work! We truly value their partnership and look forward to many more years of benefiting from their impact on our city.”

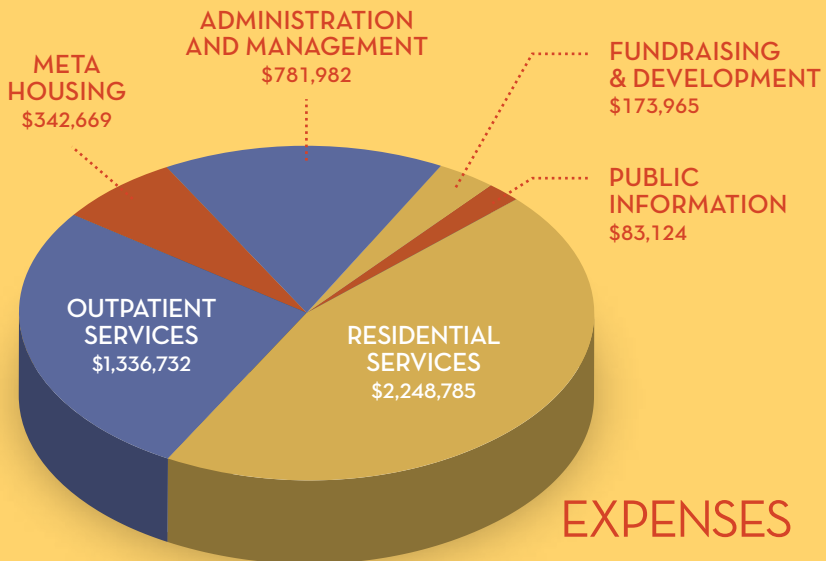
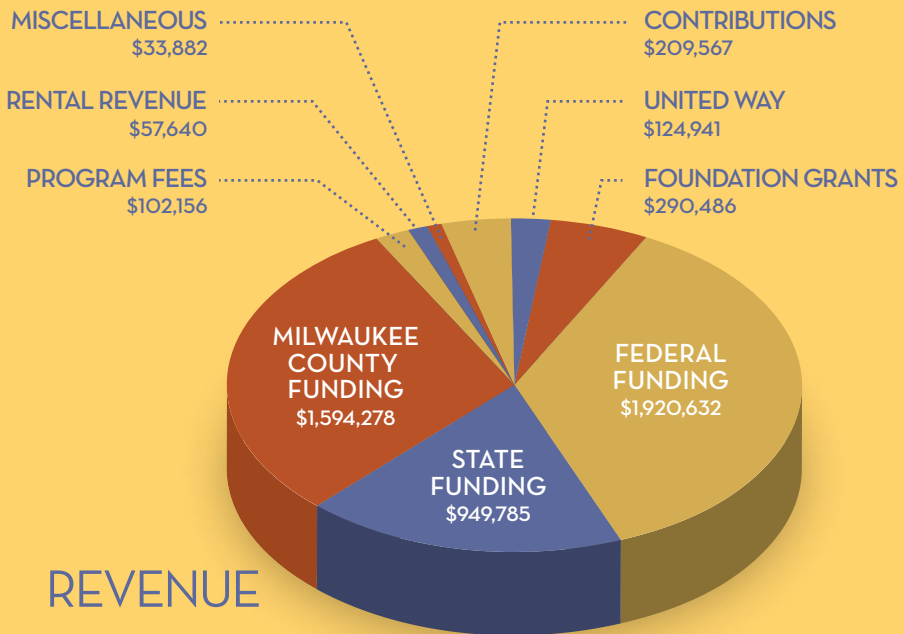
– NICOLE AGRESANO
VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNITY IMPACT

REVENUE 2008	
Contributions	\$209,567
United Way	\$124,941
Foundation grants	\$290,486
Federal funding	\$1,920,632
State funding	\$949,785
Milwaukee County Funding	\$1,594,278
Program fees	\$102,156
Investment income	-\$133,472
Rental Revenue	\$57,640
Miscellaneous	\$33,882
TOTAL	\$5,149,895

EXPENSES 2008	
Program Services – Residential	\$2,248,785
Program Services – Outpatient	\$1,336,732
Program Services –Meta Housing	\$342,669
Administration & Management	\$781,982
Fundraising & Development	\$173,965
Public Information	\$83,124
TOTAL	\$4,967,257

In **2005**, Meta House was featured in the Annual Report of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and recognized by President Bush in a speech for our unique ability to serve mothers and their children.

AL HIGHLIGHTS



How can you get involved?

donate

MAKE A FINANCIAL GIFT or pledge that allows Meta House to continue our essential work in the Milwaukee community.

DONATE MATERIALS, OR GIFTS in-kind, needed by our mothers and children to furnish their homes and rebuild their lives.

Make Meta House part of your estate plans or **MAKE A DEFERRED GIFT** (such as bequests, trusts, and annuities) to the agency

contribute

Groups are now starting to **ORGANIZE DONATION DRIVES** at their churches and offices to collect items for Meta House's wish list. These drives allow us to provide essential items to women and children in all of our programs.

HAVE A PARTY or host an activity honoring Meta House and collect in-kind donations or raise money. This is a fun way to get together and make a difference in the lives of the women and children at Meta House.

FORM A GROUP to help paint and decorate rooms for women and their children in the residential program.

advocate

The best way to hear more about Meta House is to **COME FOR A TOUR** where you will see our mission in action and meet families in recovery.

LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUES that impact their lives and tell others!

CONNECT META HOUSE TO COMMUNITY LEADERS, foundations or funding sources. Your connections help us to continue to provide our comprehensive services to women in need.

COME TO A META MOMENTS EVENT
These casual, free events give you insight into the various issues our clients face and the treatment solutions we offer. Don't forget to invite others!

volunteer

You can **OFFER YOUR TIME AND TALENTS** to our agency and help us keep costs down!

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“Meta House offers a unique and valuable service in Milwaukee. Treatment lets women address addiction, as well as employment and housing concerns. Most importantly, the entire family is treated, giving them the chance to heal and move forward with their new lives.”

— JAMES A. MARKS

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“Meta House saves the lives of many women and children.”

— ANDY FLECKENSTEIN

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"We are truly inspired by Meta House's long-term success of changing lives in the Milwaukee area. Ball Corporation is proud to partner with such a professional organization!"

— THERESE BISHOP

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Gina Haney

“Our family contributes to Meta House because of the positive impact they’ve had on the community. Children are one of our most precious resources and we feel that contributing to this charity gives some of those parents who are struggling the opportunity for a healthier lifestyle for themselves and the ones they love the most.”

— ANDY GUSHO

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