



The Year in Review



Mission

We are a community-oriented partner providing a customized, family-centered approach to asset building and personal growth.



Vision

We will be the leading model for enabling communities to thrive through empowerment, goal-setting and equitable opportunities.



Values

Collaboration
Growth
Empowerment
Equity
Integrity



Introducing Cornerstone Renter Equity!

If you have been following us over the last few years, you are likely aware that we have undergone a series of big shifts. This evolution of expanding our housing model has been the outcome of many focus groups and conversations with partners, donors, staff, and those we serve. We are finally settling into the new us, and we hope you are as excited for this untrodden Cornerstone Renter Equity as we are.

We are providing the opportunity and platform for our families to be a part of the larger community in Over the Rhine. Renter Equity members participate in keeping Over the Rhine clean, safe, and neighborly through block clean-ups, community meetings, and more events.

We invest real dollars in our families. For the work they do as neighbors, we invest up to \$1,000 annually, and for the work they do as individuals, we invest up to \$600 annually. Everyone has something to offer and a dream of their own. With the help of our members, partners, and donors, we facilitate fulfillment.

We see community members as they see themselves, and we want to give our families every chance to be the best version of themselves that they can be!



Above: Two long-term residents at a recent block clean-up

A Word from Bob Maly

It was an honor to take on the role as Cornerstone Renter Equity's Executive Director for the past three and a half years. Coming from corporate America and having the unique opportunity to form friendships and relationships with our families in Over the Rhine has been an amazing experience that I will always carry with me.

Our accomplishments over the past several years would not have been possible without the support of our incredible board and staff. I am thankful for every person who contributed to our team. Particularly, I would like to thank Larry Williams for taking on the role of board president. He challenged me when necessary and was a great mentor to me. In addition, Erin Hinson, the first person who I hired at Cornerstone Renter Equity, was key to our success, bringing creativity and passion to the table. Erin was responsible for beginning the development of a program that made true progress in the lives of people in our community.



Above: Bob Maly was our dedicated Executive Director for three and a half years

I am very excited for what is ahead for Cornerstone Renter Equity. Under new leadership, I am sure that we will rise to a whole new level. Our families face everyday challenges, making ends meet and dealing with the personality of the neighborhood. Nonetheless, they find success and pride in everything that they do. Moving forward, we strive to continue to be the leading model for enabling communities to thrive through empowerment, goal-setting, and equitable opportunities.



Above: Bob helping with a clean-up in the neighborhood



Above: Bob giving a presentation about the work at Cornerstone Renter Equity



Meet Alisa Berry, New Executive Director

Cornerstone Renter Equity welcomes new Executive Director, Alisa Berry! While new to this role, Alisa is not new to Cornerstone. She was previously a member of the board for two years as chair of the Renter Equity Committee. For more than 20 years, Alisa has dedicated her life to serving families and children. She is a visionary leader with a track record of success. By using best practice interventions and strategies, Alisa has reshaped programs and increased outcomes for families. A Cincinnati native, Alisa graduated from St. Ursula Academy. After graduating from St. Ursula, she went on to Norfolk State University where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and then Northern Kentucky University where she received her Masters in Public Administration with a Non-Profit Management Certificate. Alisa has a passion for working with families and assisting them in reaching their greatest potential. It is her belief that all families have the tools to be successful; some families just need assistance identifying their tools. Alisa is excited to join the growing Cornerstone Renter Equity team and looks to continue the great work started by Bob Maly during his tenure.



Above: Alisa Berry began as Executive Director in November 2019

Our Board

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President

Kevin Hughes
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Jonathan Bennie
Secretary

Doug Meyers
Treasurer

Brendon Dunnigan
Monique Gilliam
John Hancock
Kurt Hibbett
Francy Hughes
Deb Kelley
Don Larson
Bob Maly
Gloria Samuel
Brian Smyth
Joe Sunderman



Above: Last summer, we celebrated one of our most successful block parties yet!



2019 in Review

109 units of Renter Equity housing

Obtained baseline self-sufficiency data for families

20 community building events throughout the year

Served nightly Kids Cafe dinners during the summer

Largest block party yet in collaboration with Elementz

Began Active Family Coaching and launched successful pilot

Added 2 new family coaches to our growing team



2019 in Review

2019 was a chance to dive into what we had launched and learned in 2018. We interviewed 49 of our families and obtained baseline data from which to grow. We learned for the first time the dreams of many of our community members - to send their children to college, to start a candy shop, to grow a painting business, to attend phlebotomy school, to start a cleaning company, to become a truck driver, to quit smoking, to be able to save money.

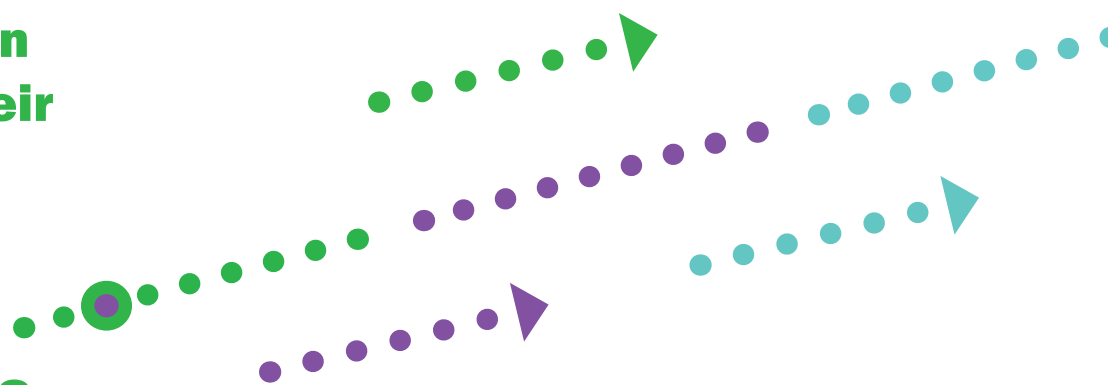
We learned where our families were the strongest and where we needed to increase supports. While we knew that most of our families are able to pay rent on time every month, we learned that many of our members needed support in accessing food every other month and that they preferred to shop at Findlay Market when possible because the food was fresh, healthy, and close by.

As a result of this more in-depth assessment, we hired two additional family coaches. One of the newly hired family coaches focused on financial education, budgeting, financial literacy courses, and more. She focused on working with individuals to discuss their financial goals and increase their capacity to save and budget. The second family coach talked with families about their goals, their plans for making their dreams a reality, how to hold them accountable, and how to help them fill gaps in support as needed.

After launching our pilot, we expanded coaching to all families last September. Since then, we have seen dramatic results including three people increasing their income and three people enrolling in school to increase their incomes. Many more individuals believed in themselves and their dreams. We are excited to continue this work in 2020 and hope you will join us to grow our impact!

**100% of families
took action
towards their
goals**

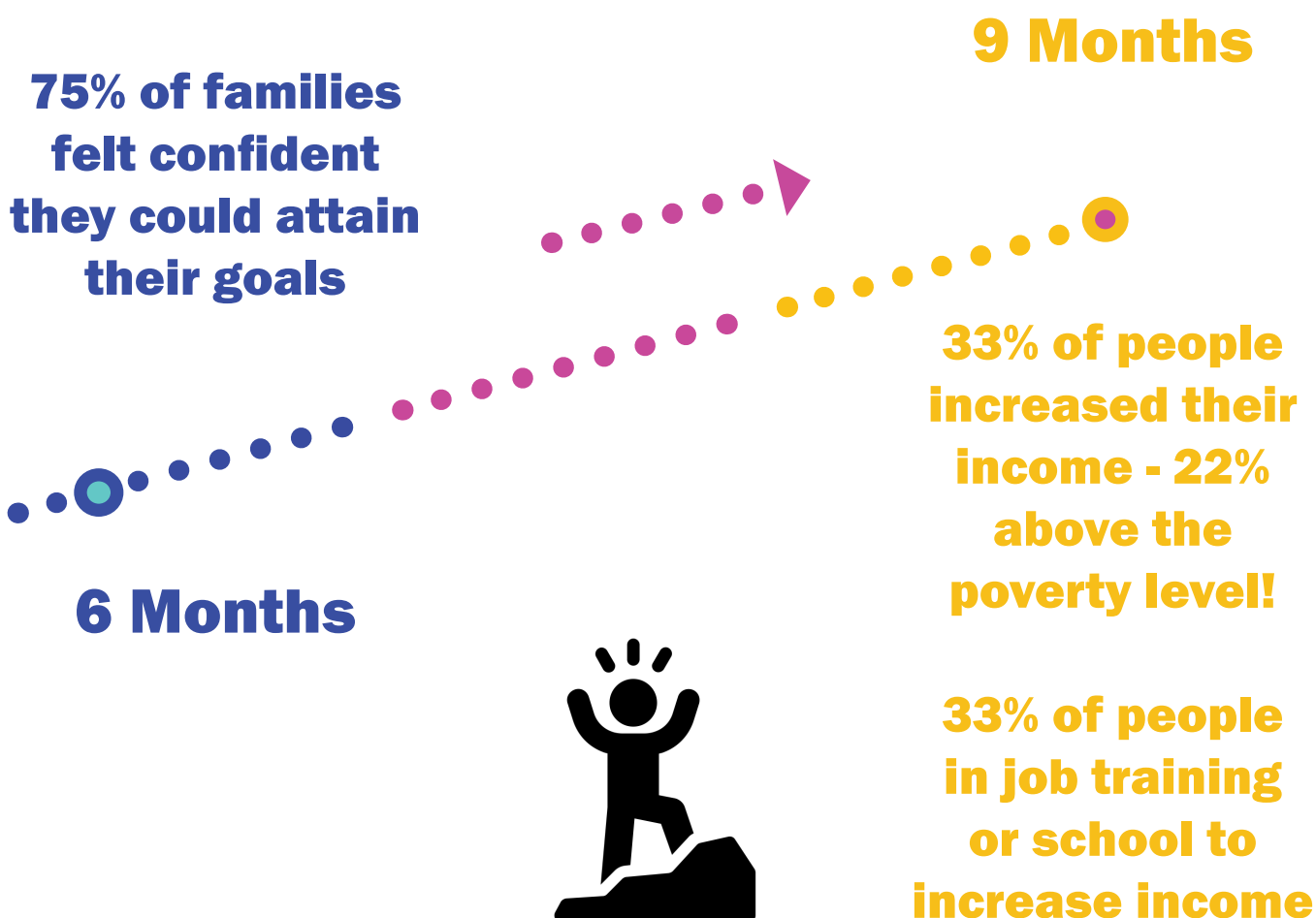
3 Months



The Pilot (May-December 2019)

In the spring of last year, we launched our small-scale pilot project. Our team directly invested in participants to diligently work towards their goals. Like many pilots, there were some kinks to work through. Our families told us about areas where they wanted more communication. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm from everyone was palpable.

Community members were on top of it, meeting with family coaches on a monthly basis to communicate their goals and reach milestone after milestone. One individual enrolled in phlebotomy school, one woman enrolled in nursing school, two people quit smoking, and two more people registered their businesses. While we did not see the need for additional supports decrease, we made a few adjustments including lines for direct support. We expect to see results from these changes in the coming year.



Barriers & Challenges

External Neighborhood

The closing of Findlay Park drastically changed our neighborhood. There is increased noise and activity and our families are striving to maintain their sense of community in the middle of all of it.

Community Room Resources

Our families desire a community room that can serve after school and be a place where people can go to talk, relax, and engage in their community.

Gap Supports

When families are making progress towards their goals, often other supports drop faster than people can fill them.

Poverty as a Whole

Poverty in the city of Cincinnati is high with 27% of our neighbors living in poverty. Yet, in Over the Rhine, where we are located, rates are even higher with 32% of people experiencing poverty.

Property Taxes

Tax abatements expired, and now we owe property taxes on our affordable housing property. Yet, we keep our rent values low so that families can continue to live within their means and work toward building their assets and increasing their income.

Resources

We are thankful for so many wonderful partners, members, neighbors, philanthropists, ideologists, philosophers, and thought leaders in our city of Cincinnati.

Our Plan to Address Them

We hired Keng, a multi-cultural marketing company in Cincinnati, to help us design and build a community-wide survey. This survey is our first step towards engaging with the larger Over the Rhine and building a strong community of Good Neighbors.



We surveyed our families to determine what they want in a community room. The results are in! People want a space for computer training to help with studying and applying for jobs. They also want it to be relaxing and kid-friendly. We will be fundraising for this need throughout 2020.



In 2019, we partnered with Jobs and Family Services to launch Project Lift and access Prevention, Retention, Contingency funding. This funding has been a game-changer for our families, providing support to take major steps toward realizing their dreams and increasing their incomes and assets.



We are focused on tracking gross income, net income, and net assets of our families to ensure that we are focused on reducing poverty and increasing income rates in our community.



The property taxes in our affordable housing community Friars Court are almost \$20,000 annually. We are working to keep our expenses down while being committed to providing quality, timely maintenance. We are seeking to help cover the difference through fundraising efforts.



We are continually meeting with members and partners to identify new potential resources. We strive to use these resources to leverage our program and contribute towards increasing the incomes and assets of our families as they work to achieve their unique goals.



Success Story!

Long term resident, Danielle Baskin, is a proud member of the Cornerstone Renter Equity community. She moved here with her son Donzelle and daughter Donielle when they were 10 and 8 years old respectively. Since joining the community nearly 15 years ago, Danielle has seen many changes within herself and her family.

Over the years, Danielle has helped her son, Donzelle, excel in school. Donzelle regularly went to the Boys and Girls Club, was named Youth of the Year twice, was a National Scholar, and graduated from Walnut Hills High School. He went on to college and graduated from the University of Cincinnati. Donzelle even recently got married! When Danielle talks about her son and his success in life, she beams with joy for him.

The Cornerstone Renter Equity team was here for Danielle when she became a grandmother as well. Last winter, Danielle's family showered her daughter Donielle, the soon-to-be mom, with congratulations and excitement in our office community room. This February, they celebrated her granddaughter Maleyah's first birthday!

In addition to being a mom and grandmother, Danielle has ambitions of her own. When she joined us on our journey with the pilot program last May, she shared her dreams of attending school and purchasing a home. We worked with her on goal setting, financial goal planning, and, as she stated, ***"They [the coaches] have been following me, like whatever I've been saying that I wanted to do, they've been making sure they stay with me step by step, giving me time so I can get it done. Fulfilling my goals. We are really progressing from it."***

In January 2020, Danielle started phlebotomy school. She is proud to be in school. She quotes, ***"I finally just did what I had to get there, and I think most of all my granddaughter really inspired a lot of that."***



Above: Danielle Baskin has been a proud member of the community for nearly 15 years

Danielle's internal drive and commitment put her on a pathway to success, and the support from Cornerstone Renter Equity allowed her goals to be realized. Project Lift funding supported her to pay for school, and now she has the ambitions to continue within the medical field.

A next step Danielle and her family are excited about is home ownership. She has already met with and started talking to family coaches about options for the future, and she recently met with a realtor. She has excellent credit too. The only thing holding her back at this point is being in school and not working full-time. She cannot wait to start working and be able to set new roots in one of five area neighborhoods that she is looking into. Danielle is excited to begin this new chapter in her life.



Above: Danielle with her beloved daughter Donielle and granddaughter Maleyah

While we cannot wait to celebrate Danielle finishing school and purchasing her first home, we will be sad to see her go. She has been such a wonderful and positive force in our community and an inspiration to anyone with a dream.

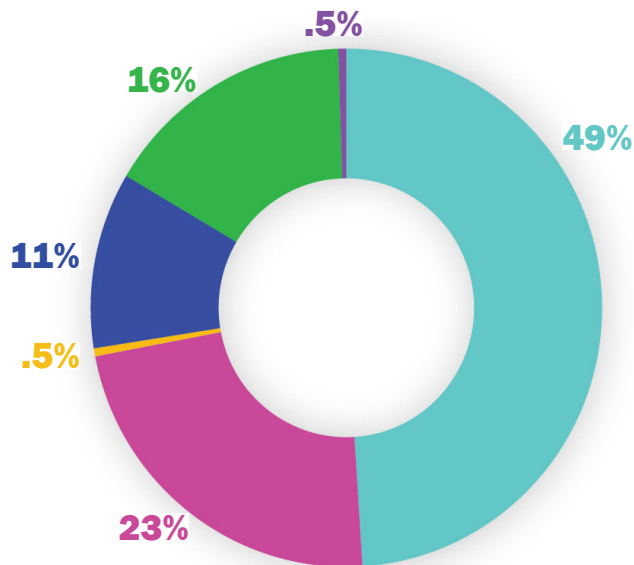
We asked her what advice she might give to her younger self. We think it is good advice for anyone and plan to share it with other community members.

Here's what Danielle said:

- **If there is something that you like, stick with that.**
- **Be dedicated, serious about your goals, and committed.**
- **Look deep inside and make sure you know what you want.**

Financial Statements

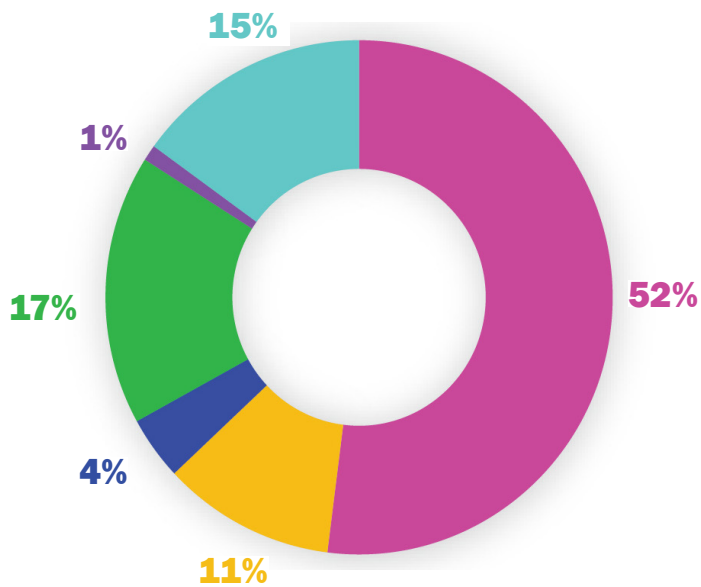
2019 Revenue



\$460,543

- Grants
- Donations
- Loan Fund
- Management Fees
- Developer Fees
- Investments & Interests

2019 Expenses



\$423,126

- Property Loss
- Renter Equity Program
- Property Management
- Fundraising
- Admin & Management
- Loan Fund

Donors

Anonymous Household
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Jean & Mark Calkin
Bernice Cooper
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Carol & Keith Cron
DePaul Cristo Rey
Brendon Dunigan
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all our many
wonderful donors
and partners! We
could not do this
meaningful work
without you!**









To connect with us at Cornerstone Renter Equity, please call
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www.cornerstone-equity.org



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