

Empowering Female Leaders of Tomorrow!



Bernadette's House 2023 Annual Report
www.bernadetteshouse.org

*From the Desk of Dr. Andrea L. Cohen,
President, Board of Directors*



To all the wonderful people who make Bernadette's House unique and successful,

2023 brought several challenges to the Bernadette's House (BH) team, which we met and overcame with enthusiasm for our mission and persistence. The departure of several leaders in the organization, who had to step back due to family and work commitments, left us behind as we worked to bring new programs online, and continue successful endeavors from the past. As such, there were important changes to our team, which allowed us to end the year stronger than ever!

Thanks to the generosity of our valued BH supporters, and the determination of our amazing volunteers, we were able to move into our new business space near the Mayor's offices in Laurel, MD in February of 2023. Setting up shop in a professional environment allowed us to interact meaningfully in-person with Laurel government officials – resulting in a strengthening of our relationships with past supporters, and an initiation of a great connection with our new Laurel Mayor, Mr. Keith Sydnor, who has already shown himself to be a great supporter of the work that we do. We were also able to use the office to carry out interviews, and training, and it allowed us the space to move items out of our storage unit, saving the organization money on rental fees.

Our mentoring program served 10 girls in the winter/spring semester of 2023, and the Brains and Beauty Summer Camp was once more a smashing success. We also had changes in BH leadership – notably the addition of six new board members to the organization (now nine total). This knowledgeable group of community leaders has brought new ideas and points of view to BH and has allowed us not only to reinstate previous programs, but also plan new ones for 2024.

I am excited to see what 2024 has in store, with the re-establishment of our BH Blossoms Mentoring Program and our brand-new Robotics for Girls Course. We are grateful to each and every person that has helped us to emerge from 2023 with a new sense of renewal and innovation. We hope you will be part of our future successes by joining us for the exciting activities we have planned for next year!

With appreciation,

Andrea “Andie” Cohen

BH Board President

*From the Desk of Carol Nash
Founder/CEO*



Dear Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our dedicated staff, and the families entrusted to our care, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support you have generously provided over the past year. Your collective efforts have enabled us to maintain and enhance our mentoring program, providing invaluable personalized guidance to young ladies and empowering them to conquer the unique obstacles they face in this challenging season of life.

Reflecting on the past year, I personally encountered significant challenges, including a severe illness and the subsequent loss of my beloved husband shortly after my recovery. Life is a journey of peaks and valleys, and it is in recognition of this reality that Bernadette's House is steadfastly committed to developing programs that not only captivate and engage but also empower our girls to take control of their lives. Through fostering critical thinking skills and metacognitive strategies, we aim to equip them with the insight needed to navigate the complexities of today's global world.

I am deeply moved by the dedication and commitment exhibited by our volunteer staff during my absence. The knowledge that our organization can persevere despite unexpected disruptions is a testament to the strength of our collective mission.

As we venture into 2024, we anticipate a year of growth, building upon our strategic plan. Your continued support is integral to our success, and we eagerly look forward to the journey ahead.

With sincere appreciation,

Carol Nash

BH Founder | CEO

Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment for young girls to explore their purpose in life.

Vision

Bernadette's House was created to help young girls Believe, Blossom, and Soar!

Our Core Values

Trustworthiness and ethical behavior are required in the organization

Respect for all children regardless of race and background

Excellence and a standard of honesty and integrity in all we do

Belief that with nurturing and proper training, children will soar

Compassion we preserve dignity by showing concern for each situation

Citizenship modeling social responsibility in all that we do

Our Board of Directors (as of December 31, 2023)

Executive Board

Ms. Carol Nash, *Executive Director*
Dr. Andrea Cohen, Board President
Ms. Tonya Butler, VP of Internal Affairs
Ms. Bailaou Diallo, VP of Finance
Ms. Cynthia Pines, Secretary

Directors

Ms. Celeste Cummings
Dr. Gayle Lomax
Ms. Cynthia Rankin
Mr. Mohan Gujral

Honorary Members

Dr. Grace Saunders
Dr. Yaphet Bryant
Ms. Nancy Lilly
Ms. Marianna Carter
Ms. Janice Wright

Core Program Descriptions for 2023

Service plays a pivotal role in enriching our community life. Leveraging a blend of online and in-person initiatives such as webinars, workshops, cultural outings, and homework assistance, our comprehensive and evidence-based programs enable participants to actively engage, expose, and expand within their communities. This holistic approach is fueled by creative ideas and the adept management of resources, ensuring effective and efficient implementation across various activities.

Bernadette's Blossoms

Our in-person mentoring program for girls

The BH mentoring program empowers BH Girls to use social life skills and self-discipline to increase confidence and self-esteem as they become the leaders of tomorrow. This program involves matching each girl 1:1 with a volunteer mentor who meets with her mentee weekly to engage in educational and empowering conversations and activities that promote self-empowerment and positive identity. Bernadette's House will also provide a safe physical and virtual space for mentees to communicate while mentors provide guidance and encourage them to be the best versions of themselves. Our holistic approach addresses meeting the mentee's academic, physical, mental, and emotional needs.



BH has partnered with Front-Step, Inc., a mentoring group in Philadelphia, to connect with Bernadette's House as we support our girls and parents with the tools to empower our youth. We have plans in 2024 to expand our partnerships in an effort to share our resources.



BH has also established an agreement with Sci-Tech, Inc. to ensure that our girls remain up-to-date and knowledgeable in science (STEM.)

BH Robotics for Girls

This year, we planned for the 2024 launch of our first **STEM** program “**Robotics for Girls**,” a 16-week basic hands-on level of programming, designed to foster:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- An understanding of the field of robotics
- Background on how the internet and devices talk/connect



ROBOTICS FOR GIRLS

For Middle and High School Students

SPONSORED BY BERNADETTE'S HOUSE
~FREE FOR PARTICIPANTS~

Saturdays 1:30 - 3:00 pm

February 10th - Jun 8th, 2024

16 weeks, In-Person and Virtual

15 spots available

To be held at the Woman's Club of Laurel

384 Main St, Laurel, MD 20707



This program is scheduled to launch in early 2024, and we are so pleased to be able to offer this exciting educational programming to the community at no cost to the participants (due to a generous contribution from an anonymous donor)!

Girls Rising Webinars

Monthly programming that equips girls for leadership

The Girls Rising Webinar Program offers monthly virtual workshops for members to engage with guest speakers on various topics that impact girls. These workshops are available to members at no cost but are open to all. *Members must attend a minimum of 6 programs per year.*



Girls Rising Webinar:

Spring into Self Care

Our girls enjoy a close relationship with each other using technology.

BH Village

A holistic approach to helping families grow and learn together.

The Village is a series of monthly guest speaker workshops online and in person to address topics relevant to young girls' socio-emotional and physical development. Bernadette's House will launch BH Village with the year-long mentoring program to provide BH **families with mentors**, resources, and a space to expand their knowledge about raising happy and healthy children.



BH Brains and Beauty

A week-long summer camp experience promoting wellness and financial literacy.

This year, we re-visited the successful summer camp theme from 2022, and once again offered our “Brains and Beauty” summer program. The girls met with financial advisors to learn important financial life and literacy skills, and also enjoyed field trips, which involved visiting partner businesses to make beauty products.



2023: The Year in Review

BH 2023 Annual Board Retreat A New Day to Make a Difference Laurel, MD October 21, 2023

Held at the home of our Board President on the Third Saturday of October, the agenda was full, and included a working lunch and financials deliberations. The FY23 Smart Goals were reviewed to assess program progress and FY24 SMART Goals were drafted. Other discussions included:

- A review and rewrite of 12 BH Organizational Policies
- The upcoming 2024 Robotics Program
- Communications and Development
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Facility
- BH Commitment Signing



2023 Valued Volunteers

An organization like BH would be nowhere without the efforts of all our volunteers. In 2023, we were excited to launch our “Valued Volunteers” Program. At their monthly meetings, BH Board Members were invited to nominate someone in the organization who went above and beyond in any particular month. We were pleased to select five our helpers in 2023 for this honor. Each awardee received a gift card and acknowledgment on BH’s social media accounts. You can learn more about their vital contributions on the BH website (<https://www.bernadetteshouse.org/valued-volunteers.html>)

January Ms. Margo & Mr. Steve Coons

February Ms. Shania Foster

March Dr. Grace Saunders

May Ms. Robin Edwards

June Ms. Emilola Abayomi

The following timeline describes our significant 2023 accomplishments:

January 2023	Kickoff of the 2023 BH Blossoms Mentoring Program BH accepted for participation in the 2023 Combined Federal Campaign BH achieves Silver Seal of Transparency on GuideStar BH institutes “Valued Volunteers” monthly acknowledgment program
February 2023	BH Girls participate in mentor/mentee painting activity BH takes occupancy of new office space on Sandy Spring Road in Laurel, MD BH achieves Gold Seal of Transparency on GuideStar
March 2023	BH Blossoms participants enjoy a roller-skating activity BH implements formal volunteer hours tracking through Google Docs
April 2023	BH Girls take a field trip to see Debbie Allen Dance Troupe Performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC
May 2023	BH achieves Platinum Seal of Transparency on GuideStar BH Girls participate in “Laurel Lakefest” Celebration
June 2023	BH Participates in the Columbia, MD Juneteenth Celebration BH Holds an end-of-year party to close out the spring Blossoms Program
July 2023	BH Partners with SciTech2U for Aeronautics Summer Camp
August 2023	Brains and Beauty BH Summer Camp Week held on Main Street in Laurel, with support from PNC Bank and Savage Mill businesses BH holds successful Dinner Party and Paint and Sip fundraisers
September 2023	BH begins planning for 2024 BH Robotics Program BH works with Manifestation Ministries & Push-4-Greatness Mentoring
October 2023	8th Annual Board Retreat Hosted Dr. Andrea Cohen (Board President) BH Vacates storage space in Laurel, MD BH holds successful Yard Sale fundraiser BH welcomes three new board members
November 2023	BH participates in giving Tuesday to help offset the cost of programs BH selected by Giant Foods Laurel for bag donation program
December 2023	BH welcomes two new board members BH holds holiday get-together for board members, volunteers, and Laurel government representatives BH engages with donors on end-of-year funding drive

We would like to thank **Margo Stoll** and Steve Coons for their continued and unwavering support in producing our newsletter, which keeps the community informed.

We seek outside funding to continue providing holistic, affordable mentoring programs and special events like Keeping Our Youth Safe. These programs are open to all and continue to provide much-needed services to Laurel and the broader communities we serve.

Financial Plan (Financial report available on the BH Website)

Bernadette's House is committed to protecting and using our assets for our nonprofit Mission. Proper financial practices are critical since using best practices helps prevent and detect fraud. Best practices also assure our donors that we use their gifts for their intended purposes. We are pleased with the consistent financial oversight of Trinity Financial Services (Ms. Eboni Charley).

Bernadette's House 2023 Strategic Partners

Amazon

Alco Pharmacy

Front Step Mentoring, Philadelphia

Love Life Cafe

Laurel Woman's Club

LMD Agency

Manifestation Ministries

PNC Bank

Push-4-Greatness

SciTech2U

Moving forward, Bernadette's House is committed to serving our youth. We hope to return to our after-school programs in the Fall of 2025.

Thank you for reading!

~This Important Work Needs Your Help~

Your Donation Is More Important Than Ever Before!

Donations can be made at the BH Website: <https://www.bernadetteshouse.org/donate.html>

Checks can also be mailed to:

Bernadette's House
14625 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 171
Laurel, MD 20707

Volunteer and Make a Difference!

Not everyone can make a financial contribution, but everyone can make a difference.

- Volunteer to be a mentor
- Volunteer in the office to make phone calls to our community stakeholders
- Volunteer to become a board member

Please visit our website, www.bernadetteshouse.org, to learn more,

or call the office at 301-578-5157

Our Wish List

- Purchase of a house in 2024
- Laptop computers
- A 12-passenger van and driver

Looking Forward

Finance:

We expect to increase funding by 10% through grants and online donations to expand unrestricted funds.

Programs:

We hope to expand our services to include more underserved areas in 2024 and return to our After-School-Time Program.



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