

Empowering Female Leaders of Tomorrow!



Bernadette's House 2024 Annual Report

www.bernadetteshouse.org

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



To the friends and volunteers who support Bernadette's House,

2024 continued to be a year of transition for Bernadette's House (BH), with the reimagining of several existing programs and the start of a number of new and exciting initiatives. We also welcomed new, motivated leadership into the organization, with the addition of several board members and individuals to fill previously vacant executive positions. Together, the organizing team worked diligently to provide exciting programming to the young girls in our community and successfully served their families and the community of Laurel through innovation, insight, and expertise. We finish 2024 stronger than we were when we began, thanks to all of our amazing donors, our vital volunteers, and of course, the amazing young women and their families who put their trust in us to deliver high quality and relevant programming to meet their needs.

The amazing generosity of our truly outstanding BH supporters, and the determination of our dedicated volunteers allowed us to institute an exciting new curriculum – our BH Robotics for Girls course, which ran during the winter/spring school semester. We welcomed 15 girls into the program in February, and by the end of May, they were programming circuits and making their own digital pianos. The learning did not stop there; however, as we brought a new and exciting summer offering in our two-week “Brains and Beauty” program. Girls enjoyed a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) experience with week one focused on theatre (including a heart-felt rendition of a play chronicling the life of Bessie Coleman, the first African American female pilot), and week two centered on aeronautics. Girls learned from professionals all about air navigation and learned how to fly a drone (which they were given to take home). The week culminated in a co-pilot experience in a Cessna at a local airport!

We also strengthened our BH Blossoms Mentoring Program, adding new girls and volunteers to our offering in early 2024. Our volunteers were carefully selected to form one-on-one mentoring relationships with the girls and were provided with activities during the winter/spring semester. We also continued the program in the fall semester, welcoming back several returning mentor/mentee pairs and establishing new ones. This offering still represents the flagship program for the organization, and it continues to allow young girls to “Believe, Blossom, and Soar!” I am excited to see what 2025 will bring to our vibrant organization. We have a strong sense of purpose and are excited to begin offering even more valuable programs to the local community. We are so grateful to everyone who enabled us to have a strong 2024, and we invite you all to continue to be a part of the BH success story in the upcoming year.

With thanks,
Andrea “Andie” Cohen
BH Board President

From the Desk of Carol Nash



Greetings all,

It is with a humble spirit that I share my reflections over the past year. I am happy to report that despite the challenges of 2023, Bernadette's House continued to grow and "Thrive."

The theme chosen by our new Blossoms leaders aligns with our strategic five-year Plan and vision for 2022. After 12 years as CEO, it helped guide my decision to step down.

After watching our young ladies enjoy face-to-face experiences over the past year, including the Brains and Beauty summer program by Robin Edwards and our Robotics for Girls, led by Guland Mohan and his team. I am also excited at the direction our Blossoms program is moving to, led by our new VP of Internal Affairs, LaWanda McGlone, and Amra Harris, one of our own. Amra returned to BH after graduating from UMBC and decided to give back to her community by volunteering with us. I am excited to keep moving the organization forward and to transition into a new chapter under their capable leadership. I am grateful for Ms. Syvella Brantly, who has agreed to serve as interim Board president. I am confident that Bernadette's House will continue serving the community with the same distinctive excellence and bold plans to inspire our girls to Believe, Blossom, and SOAR.

While we are saddened to see Dr. Andrea Cohen step down after her remarkable leadership since 2017, we are incredibly grateful for her perseverance and dedication through every challenge. She has truly set a high standard for excellence! The silver lining? Dr. Cohen will remain with us as a board director throughout this exciting transition, continuing to share her immense talent and insights. Stay tuned as we embrace new opportunities and prepare for a fantastic journey at Bernadette's House in 2025 and beyond! Stay tuned for more updates coming soon. Together, we will continue to grow and become the most unique mentoring program in the area. We will rebound from COVID!

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;

Believe 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, 2024)

Executive Board

Andrea Cohen, PhD, President

Carol Nash, *Executive Director*

LaWanda McGlone, Vice President of Internal Affairs

Cynthia Pines, Vice President Finance

Amara Harris, Executive Secretary

Board Directors

Celeste Cummings

Mohan Gujral

Honorary Members

Grace Saunders, PhD Yaphet Bryant, PhD Nancy Lilly Marianna Carter Janice Wright
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Core Program Descriptions for 2024

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 engage, expose, and expand within their communities actively. 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 is the umbrella from which every other activity flows from. It empowers BH Girls to use social and life skills 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 confidence, high self-esteem, and positive identity. Bernadette's House also provides a safe physical and virtual space for mentees to communicate while mentors offer guidance and encourage them to be their best versions. Our holistic approach addresses meeting the mentee's academic, physical, mental, and emotional needs.

BH has plans in 2025 to expand our partnerships in an effort to share our resources.

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

BH Robotics for Girls

In 2024, we launched 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
- A good understanding of the field of robotics
- A good understanding of how the internet and devices talk/connect.

We hope to offer this program once again in 2025.

Girls Rising Webinars

Monthly programming that equips girls for leadership

The Girls Rising Webinar was held in 2024, and will return in 2025 on a limited basis. The program offers bi-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 and are open to all the community. *Members must attend a minimum of **3 programs per year**.*



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 a year-long mentoring program to provide **BH families with mentors**, resources, and a space to expand their knowledge about raising happy and healthy children.



It takes a village to raise a child.

BH Brains and Beauty:

A two-week summer day program experience promoting personal wellness and providing innovative activities designed to empower young girls by using a comprehensive exploration of STEM concepts and experiential learning activities, including **financial literacy**.

This year, our successful summer program involved teaching the fundamentals of aeronautics and integrating drama and stage production, making it an enriching experience for all participants. This summer program aims to inspire confidence and a passion for learning in young girls, encouraging them to pursue careers in STEM. 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.

The Year in Review

BH 2024 Annual Board Retreat

A New Day to Make a Difference

Laurel, MD

October 19, 2024

Held at the home of our Board President on the Third Saturday of October, the agenda was full, and included a working lunch and financial deliberations. The FY24 Smart Goals were reviewed to assess program progress and planned FY25 SMART Goals were decided.

Other discussions included:

- A review and rewrite of 12 BH Organizational Policies
- The possible 2025 Robotics Program
- Communications and Development
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Facility
- BH Commitment (annual COI/commitment statement)
- Reflections and Closing Remarks



2024 Valued Volunteers

January: LaWanda McGlone
 March: Bonnie Jackson
 April: Julie Anbarchian
 June: Noah Jaffee
 August: Amara Harris

BH Girls Blossoming



The following timeline describes our significant 2024 accomplishments:

January, 2024	Mentor and Mentee recruitment Matching event for the 2024 BH Blossoms Mentoring Program
February 2024	BH Robotics for Girls sessions begins Blossoms event at Montpelier Cultural Arts Center
March, 2024	BH Sandy Spring business office closes Mentoring Zumba class
April, 2024	Mentoring field trip to the theatre BH participation in Laurel Resources Fair with LARS
May 2024	BH Mentoring activity with Candles by Candy (community sponsor)
June 2024	BH participates in two Laurel and Howard County Juneteenth Celebrations End-of-year party for BH Robotics for Girls Program Mentor volunteer appreciation activity
July 2024	BH Partners with SciTech2U for Aeronautics Summer Camp
August 2024	Brains and Beauty BH Summer Program Week is held on Main Street in Laurel, with support from PNC Bank and Savage Mill businesses. Pinot's Palette Fundraiser
September 2024	Mentoring and Mentee Recruitment for 2024-2025 School Year
October	BH Blossoms Volunteer Match

2024	9 th Annual Board Retreat Hosted by Dr Andrea Cohen (Board President) BH welcomes three new board members
November 2024	BH Girls Field Trip-Museum of the Bible, Washington, DC BH Participates in Giving Tuesday to help offset the cost of programming
December 2024	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 **all donors and supporters of Bernadette's House** for their continued and unwavering support. We seek outside funding to provide holistic, affordable mentoring programs and special events. These programs are open to all and continue providing much-needed services to Laurel and our broader communities.

Financial Plan (Financial report available upon request).

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

2023-25 Strategic Goals

1. Quality Programs
2. Sustainability
3. Exceptional Human Capital
4. Growth

Bernadette's House 2024 Strategic Partners

Amazon

Alco Pharmacy

Love Life Cafe

Laurel Woman's Club

PNC Bank

SciTech2U

More Than Java Cafe

DTLR

Moving forward, Bernadette's House is committed to serving our youth. We hope to return to our after-school programs soon.

Thanks for reading,

Carol Nash.

This Work Needs Your Help!

Your Donation Is More Important Than Ever Before!

Donations by mail may 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, call the office at 301-578-5157.

Our Wish List

- Purchase of a house in 2026

Advocacy Matters

We intend to become fully engaged in efforts to demonstrate to our community that Bernadette's House is a resource to improve the lives of at-risk girls and their families. "Raise Your Voice for Girls" by telling us your concerns and joining the many women who are determined to make a difference in the lives of the girls who are Tomorrow's women and future leaders. Please follow our Advocacy program on our website: www.bernadetteshouse.org.

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 2025 and return to our After-School-Time Program.



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