



# 2025 Annual Report



**HIAWATHA HOMES**

*Our mission is to provide quality support services to people with disabilities at home and in the community.*

Over the last 20 years, I have built some of the most meaningful and fulfilling relationships of my life here at Hiawatha Homes. These connections extend beyond the people we support to include their families, our board members, volunteers, and our dedicated team – the true foundation of our organization.

Listening and learning shaped my early experience. It didn't take long to recognize how amazing Hiawatha Homes is. Spending time with the people we support, their families and team members, and touring our homes, gave me a clear understanding of where we were succeeding and where we needed to improve. From those conversations, two priorities emerged: enhancing accessible housing and creating a home to support individuals with brain injuries.

One of the first major steps came in 2007, when Northern Heights was replaced with the Butler Home. This change provided individuals with greater independence through more accessible living. That momentum continued over the first decade with the construction of nine fully accessible homes, and the second decade included improvements to six bathrooms to enhance both accessibility and safety.

Those successes were followed by significant challenges during the staffing crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. We ultimately made the difficult decision to consolidate and close our four-bed respite home. Although the home is currently being rented and remains in our possession, the goal is to one day reopen it as a respite home. Overnight respite care continues to be a critical need in our community, and restoring that service remains important.

The focus now is on strengthening our organization for the future – reducing open hours, rebuilding our training program, decreasing staff turnover, and growing our Family Support Services program.

A positive culture has always been central to this work. Trust, respect, and teamwork allow people to use their strengths, support one another, and succeed together.

*Cindy J. Ostrowski*  
**Cindy Ostrowski, CEO**



# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 1 Develop holistic solutions to equip Hiawatha Homes programs with stable leadership.

- Gather staff feedback on our HH Strategic Priorities.
  - Focus group meetings resulted in the formation of four action planning groups.
  - Pilot programs are being explored for career path opportunities.
- Improve recruiting and retention efforts.
  - TownSquare radio ads with person-centered approach.
  - Advocate for industry-competitive pay.

## 2 Optimize and improve training, professional development, and mentorship.

- Revamp onboarding process.
  - Reinstate and focus on 90-day review
  - Increase in-person onboarding experiences.
- Improve training and operations.
  - Training protocols including competency based training are being re-evaluated and explored.
- Expand and implement professional development.
  - All staff have received staff development forms, encouraging them to engage in trainings through ARRM, Positive Support Practices and Leadership training.

## 3 Prioritize community integration for the people we support.

- Develop resources for the people we support.
  - Monthly activity calendar has been implemented to include HH activities, community activities and special programs from partner organizations.
  - Direct support professionals have been hired to help individuals access their community.
- Increase community partnerships.
  - Hosted an event in partnership with the Scouts.
  - Social and Wellness committee is building in opportunities for neighboring house activities.

## 4 Actively pursue resources to enhance the work of Hiawatha Homes.

- Create multi-pronged approach to raising funds.
  - Donor recognition has been explored including a thank-a-thon.
  - Host third-party fundraisers within the community such as Trunk or Treat with Tilson's Auto.
  - Strategically apply for grants to support program needs by building a grant calendar with priorities.
- Increase Community Involvement
  - Provide intentional volunteer opportunities at Festival of Trees.
  - Host an annual volunteer recognition event.
- Seek alternate sources of funding.
  - Rental home income and activity center opportunities have been explored.

## 5 Increase awareness of the value and impact of Hiawatha Homes.

- Develop public education and awareness campaign.
  - Built a Hiawatha Gear Store for team members, community members and individuals to shop and show their Hiawatha Homes support.
  - Increase presence on social media highlighting stories of individuals, key events, people and activities.
- Increase community engagement.
  - Participate in key community events such as RochesterFest, Career Fairs and Volunteer Fairs.



# ADMISSIONS AT HIAWATHA HOMES

Hiawatha Homes has approximately 40 people on our residential home waiting list. Our internal Hiawatha Homes Admissions Committee includes the Program Director, Hiawatha Homes Advocate, Director of Nursing and the CEO. This committee meets once a month or more frequently as needed. During the meetings, the committee reviews the currently open list and the current waiting list. Individuals are on the waiting list in the order that they submitted a referral form.

When determining who might tour a home, we look at the length of time they have been on the list, their overall health care needs, activities, and hobbies they enjoy (for a good roommate match), and whether or not they have a safe place to live or if they are in a hospital and/or trying to relocate back home.

Recently we have toured several individuals and family members in the homes where we have vacancies. Individuals and their family members, guardians, and case managers tour a home together and at times they tour more than one home. This gives both the people we support in the home and the people touring the home an opportunity to meet one another and determine if it will be a good roommate match. We want to create a win-win situation for everyone - for the new person moving in, their roommates, and the team members through ensuring we have all of our staffing positions filled and we have the proper nursing support for the individuals.

## 2025 Goal



The goal is to fill the open beds with individuals that are a good match with the roommates and house activities. In 2025, we started with 6 open beds outside of the 2 beds we keep for emergency/critical need placement. We were able to fill 3 beds during 2025.

## 2026 Goal



The goal is to fill the open beds with individuals that are a good match with the roommates and house activities. In 2026, we started with 4 open beds outside of the 2 beds we keep for emergency/critical need placement. We currently have 3 beds that are claimed with the goal of filling the 4<sup>th</sup> before the end of the year.

Welcome  
Home



# FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

Where we provide individualized home support services and unit-based respite services for individuals still living at home and/or with a family member.

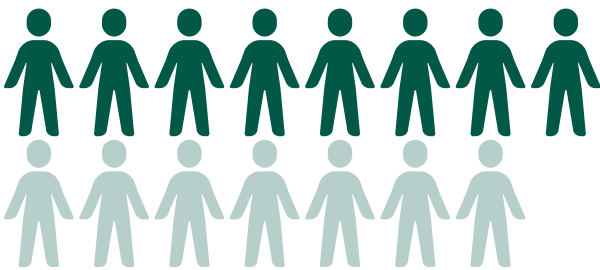


## 2025 Goal



Maintain a full-time Program Coordinator, hire a Hiawatha Homes Team leader, and grow our staffing numbers to continue to support 8-10 individuals through our Hiawatha Homes Family Support Services Program.

## 2026 Goal



We have a full-time Program Coordinator as well as a full-time Team Leader and two part-time team members. In 2026, we want to add enough team members to be able to support 15 people in Family Support Services program.



# ADVOCACY

On March 24, 2026, the Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM) held Disability Services Day at the capitol. On this day, we had 25 people including individuals we support, volunteers, board members, team members and community members advocating to increase funding to disability services to create inclusive communities.

After the rally in the rotunda our Hiawatha Homes Team and over 80 of our friends from Olmsted County visited with Senator Liz Bolden, Senator Carla Nelson, Representative Kim Hicks and Representative Tina Liebling.

The topics of concern centered around the Governor's proposed Human Services Supplemental budget including cuts such as:

- 351 Day Billing Cap for Residential Services
- 2% Annual Cap on Disability Waiver Rate Adjustments
- Moving the Awake Overnight Direct Care Wage to Minimum Wage
- Reducing Disability Grants
- and more.



**\$1.4 BILLION**  
total proposed reductions

These cuts will result in:

- Reduced access to home and community based services
- Increased wait lists for critical supports
- Greater reliance on costly institutional care
- Increased strain on families and local communities
- Workforce shortages among caregivers and providers



Contact your  
legislators

# HUMAN RESOURCES RECAP

**243,790 hours**

of direct care support provided

**240+**

amazing and dedicated staff



**80+**

individuals support in our programs

**19**

community residential homes

**In 2025,  
we hired...**

- Direct Support Professionals
- Direct Support Professionals Appointment Assistants
- House Coordinators and Team Leads
- Program Manager
- HR Director
- HR Coordinator
- Nurses
- Foundation Director
- Training Coordinator

**In 2025,  
we promoted...**

- 2 DSA → DSP
- 4 DSP → Team Leads
- 4 Team Leads → House Coordinators
- 2 House Coordinators → Senior House Coordinators
- 3 Nurses → Senior Nurse Coordinators

# FUNDRAISING REPORT

2025 was a year of exciting opportunities supporting our individuals, team members, and community partners. Our individuals participated in new activities thanks to generous donations from local community members and grants. This year we co-hosted an all abilities trunk or treat with Tilson Auto.

Civitan supported the growing needs of Family Support Services with a grant for accessible items to support enhanced skill-building and fun! The automatic ball launcher, accessible tables and sensory lights have been popular choices for activities.

Thanks to your generous donations, we've made instrumental updates to the quality of life for the individuals we serve. Projects included accessible technology, bathroom remodels, and insulation.

## Annual Fund

# \$357,815

in total donations received

# \$29,299

in grant funding

# \$149,883

annual giving

# \$102,694

unrestricted gifts

# \$47,189

designated gifts such as staff appreciation and worksite wellness, and home improvements

## Volunteers

# 12

volunteers providing companionship, and event support

# 140+ hrs

program support such as companionship and miracle league



# FESTIVAL OF TREES



**\$178,633**

raised during Festival of Trees

**82**

designed trees

**73**

tree design teams

**80**

Underwriters and sponsors

**150 volunteers,  
600+ hours**

Festival of Trees volunteers, designers, greeters, kids day support, and more!

40 years since the first Festival of Trees, Hiawatha Homes Foundation continues the celebration of giving with a week long event. This year included the Opening Night Gala, Friday Night Dance, DiverseAbility Day and Festival After Dark. The weather wasn't the ideal partner for traveling, but those that braved the snow and ice were able to walk amongst the 80 trees, bid on auction items and take pictures with Santa.

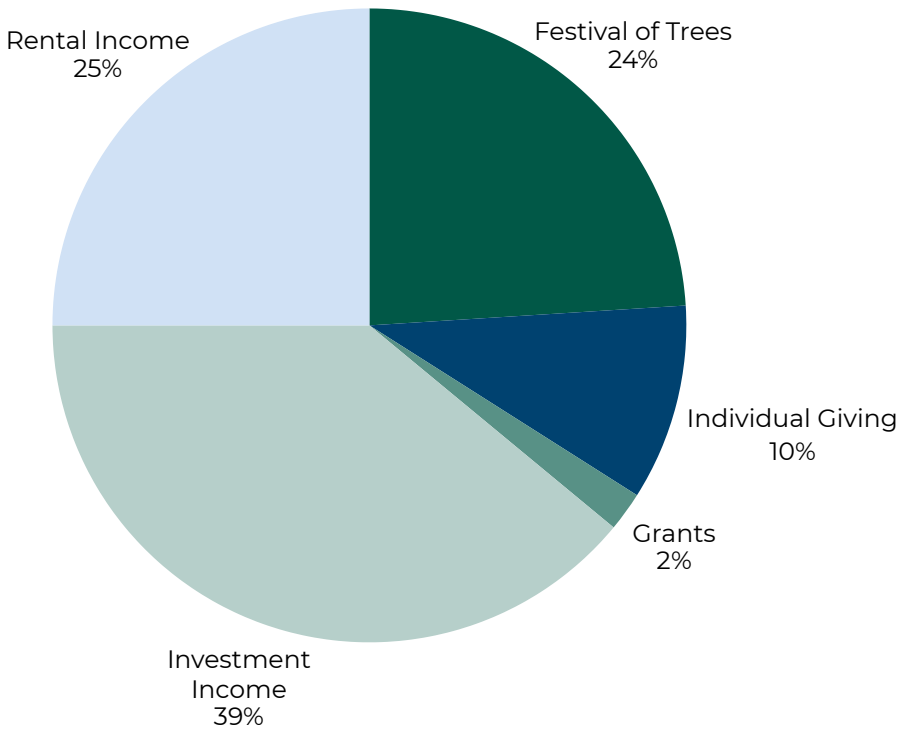


New this year, we had a live band "The Chubs" perform during Festival After Dark. They brought the good vibes and helped us celebrate the season to come. The night included a dance contest and an ugly sweater fashion show. We are excited to share that 2026 will also have a lively Festival After Dark and you won't want to miss the fun.

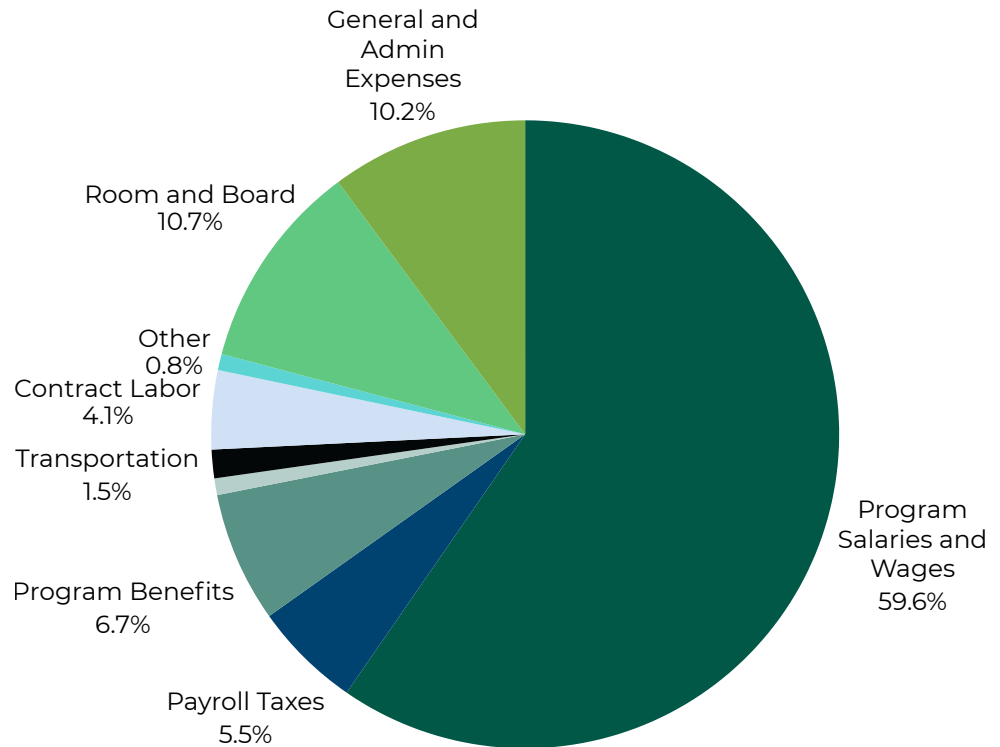


# 2025 FINANCIALS

## HHF Revenue Breakdown



## HFI Expenses Breakdown



# 2025 FINANCIALS CONTINUED...

<b>HHI Statement of Activities</b>		
		2025
<b>Residential Services Revenue</b>	Support Living Service	\$9,528,082
	Room and Board	\$982,474
	In-Home and Other Programs	\$124,297
	<b>Total Resident Services Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,634,853</b>
<b>Program Services Expenses</b>	Program Salaries and Wages	\$7,146,031
	Payroll Taxes	\$645,342
	Program Benefits	\$849,313
	Supplies	\$94,021
	Transportation	\$179,384
	Contract Labor	\$486,782
	Other	\$126,449
	Room and Board	\$1,243,290
	General and Admin Expenses	\$1,213,727
	<b>Total Program Services Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,984,389</b>
	<b>Change in Net Assest from Operations</b>	<b>-\$1,349,536</b>
<b>Other Income (Expense)</b>	Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Assets	\$8,500
	Interest Income (expense)	\$17
	Other	\$109,687
	<b>Total Other Income (Expense)</b>	<b>\$118,204</b>
	<b>Change in Net Assets Before Inclusion of Interest in and Equity Transactions with Hiawatha Homes Foundation</b>	<b>-\$1,231,332</b>
<b>Hiawatha Homes Foundation</b>	Foundation	\$811,129
	Change in interest in Net Assests of Hiawatha Homes Foundation	\$113,126
	<b>Total Foundation Support</b>	<b>\$924,255</b>
	<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>-\$307,077</b>

## 2025 FINANCIALS CONTINUED...

### HHI Statement of Financial Position

Assets	2025
Cash	\$394,127
Accounts Receivable	\$407,717
Unemployment Benefits Escrow	\$163,687
Prepaid Expenses	\$52,369
Interest in Net Assets of Hiawatha Homes Foundation	\$9,150,358
Capital Investment	\$51,426
Resident Funds	\$72,166
Property & Equipment Net	\$422,183
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$10,714,033</b>

Liabilities and Net Assets	2025
Accounts Payable	\$90,265
Accrued Expenses	\$650,154
Deferred Income	\$11,351
Residents' Funds	\$72,166
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$823,936</b>

Net Assets	
Without Donor Restrictions	\$9,868,918
With Donor Restrictions	\$21,179
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$9,890,097</b>

<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$10,714,033</b>
-----------------------------------------	---------------------

# TOWNSQUARE OVERVIEW

## Online Presence Report (January 2025 - December 2025)

- Click to Call: 50
- Form Entries: 136
- Average Search Rank: 6
- Total Views: 29,528



## Spark - Recruitment Campaign (October 2025 - December 2025)

- Impressions: 384,900
- Clicks: 1,600
- Click Through Rate: .42%
- All Conversions: 63



## KWWK and KROC

On average, every time our ad played on KROC or KWWK – 2 people went and searched for Hiawatha Homes Employment (based on 8 seconds after an ad plays) (VPA means visits per airing).

## Spark - Recruitment Campaign (October 2025 - December 2025)

- Impressions: 85,300
- Click: 61
- Click Through Rate: .07%
- People Supporting People: 1.93 VPA
- Female Personal Story: 1.90 VPA
- Male Personal Story: 1.63 VPA



# ARRM CARE NOMINEES

The ARRM Cares Award was established to recognize professionals from ARRM members who provide direct care for at least 50% of their total job and demonstrate a commitment to quality services.

## REMAE



Remae brings more than 20 years of experience to her role, and her professionalism is evident in everything she does. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the people she supports feel safe, valued, and heard. She communicates clearly and respectfully with families, co-workers, and individuals, always centering their well-being in every decision. Remae models reliability and high ethical standards, setting a positive example for others around her.



## GABE

Gabe exemplifies professional integrity through his thoughtful, person-centered approach to support. He consistently prioritizes the dignity and well-being of the individuals he serves, ensuring their needs are met with care, respect, and empathy. Gabe's personal connection to the work, having grown up with family members requiring similar care, fuels his dedication to maintaining high standards. His interactions reflect a deep understanding of how meaningful support can positively impact lives.



# LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

At the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR), learning doesn't stop at the classroom door - it expands into the community. One of the most powerful examples of this is the ongoing partnership with Hiawatha Homes, a collaboration that continues to shape students' perspectives, deepen their learning, and create connections that matter.

When students have the opportunity to learn with and from community members, education becomes more meaningful. The work that Hiawatha Homes is doing is especially important in a society where people with disabilities still face segregation and stigma. This partnership offers a chance to build genuine relationships with individuals they may not have previously had the opportunity to know, and to recognize biases they didn't even realize they carried.

Through everyday moments like chatting while working on a puzzle, playing board games, telling jokes, or bonding over movies and video games, students gain insight into the day-to-day of people with disabilities. These small moments often leave the biggest impressions.

Hiawatha Homes isn't just a placement - it's a partnership. Team members go above and beyond to support students' learning, engaging them in thoughtful, nuanced conversations about disability services, advocacy, and social change. Students gain perspectives that simply can't be replicated through textbooks alone.

At its heart, this partnership is about mutual learning, generosity, and trust. Hiawatha Homes individuals open their homes and hearts to the students, sharing their time, stories, and companionship. In return, students leave with deeper understanding, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose.

## Student Voices: Why Volunteering Matters

"Volunteering allows me to learn new things, meet new people, and hear their incredible stories. Having conversations fills my heart."

"Seeing someone light up when I walk through the door reminds me why this work matters."

"This class has allowed me to truly engage with my community in a meaningful way. It's an amazing way to spend time outside of homework - and one that I will carry with me long after graduation."

## Your Time Matters. Use it where it counts.

Whether it's a game night, a conversation, or simply being there, volunteering creates moments that change lives, including your own. Now is the perfect time to get involved. Community is built one connection at a time, and there's a place for you in it. **Get involved. Get connected. Get inspired.**

## Hiawatha Homes Inc. Board of Directors



Dirk Erickson, President, Dr. Robert Witte, Vice President, Philip Hommerding, Treasurer, Roger Dearth, HHF President, Matt Nigbur, Past President, Kathy Davis, Deb Falbo, Carol Fitzgerald, Tim Kelly, Lynne Ryan

## Hiawatha Homes Foundation Board of Directors



Roger Dearth, President, Nick Pederson, Vice President, Melissa Hale, Treasurer, Dirk Erickson, HHI President, Linda Becker, Mary Brouillard, Kathy Davis, Carol Fitzgerald, Rahn Lund, Dominique Navarro, Michelle Pyfferoen

## IN MEMORIAM: REMEMBERING THOSE WE'VE LOST



Wallace (Wally) Nigbur

March 1940 - March 2026

Wally Nigbur was on our first Hiawatha Homes Foundation Board of Directors and served 12 years, from 1983 - 1995. During his tenure on the board of directors, Wally shared his time, talent and treasure serving on the board and making a lasting impact with Hiawatha Homes.