

Signal Mountain Social Services

2018 Annual Report

Signal Mountain Social Services consistently provided exceptional services to those in our community who experienced complex needs during 2018. Following its mission to “address the needs of individuals living within the 37377 zip code during times of financial challenge and crisis, with a longer-term focus of uniquely supporting each client on their path to self-reliance”, SMSS generated new partnerships to maximize resources available to clients. The executive director and two additional social workers strive to follow this mission with the guidance of the Board of Directors consisting of 10 dedicated individuals overseeing the direction of the agency. Our Council of Representatives includes 23 members who act as our liaisons to their various community organizations. These representatives are an invaluable link to community resources and volunteers, which allows us to maximize the use of our funds. SMSS volunteers total 100+ individuals providing invaluable manpower in The Clothes House, the Food Pantry, Christmas Baskets, support for clients, and other special projects for the agency.

During 2018, 167 Signal Mountain households received services in the form of assistance with food, rent, utilities, counseling, education, home repairs, daycare, medical, dental, vision, Christmas provisions, and senior services. Our goal for the clients we serve is for each to reach self-sufficiency and manage resources wisely. In many cases this goal is achieved through life skills counseling with the social workers. We act as a bridge to a stable future for clients who may have lost jobs, are experiencing medical and dental issues, are senior clients with no family to help with their many needs, are students struggling with difficult classes, or those with transportation issues. 143 households participated in life skills counseling receiving education in areas such as budgeting, job search, resource allocation, goal setting, accountability, and parenting from one of our social workers.

Now in its third year, the Assessed Home Repair program was pleased to provide new roofs for three of our senior clients. The decay of the roofs was at a point where structural damage would have started to occur. Our seniors, who are keenly aware of their surroundings, were anxious of this impending situation. With new roofs and gutters in place, our seniors' homes are protected and their worries ceased. Through this program, we were able to provide proactive services to avoid emergency home repair situations.

The SMSS Education Programs provided life-changing opportunities for preschoolers through adults. The Educational Scholarship program provided 11 scholarships for students enrolled in technical through university level institutes through a needs-based application process. The scholarships are renewable pending required documentation. It is the hope that these students, many of whom are first generation higher education attendees, will successfully complete their programs and chart new territory for their families for years to come.

The SMSS Emergency Services Program continues to be a critical component of this agency. We are very fortunate to be able to customize the assistance granted to individuals based on their documented need. Home visits are customary to not only address the current household needs, but also to further develop relationships with the clients we serve. With heightened awareness of needs, social workers are better equipped to address the emergency at hand and strategize with clients on a positive path going forward. During 2018, 75 households received assistance through this program including rent assistance for a family leaving an abusive situation, driveway repair to aid the elderly navigate with wheelchairs, handicap ramp construction, and dental assistance for infections and extractions. In addition, there were 241 visits to the Food Pantry for emergency provisions. The value of food and supplies distributed was \$30,125.00 although the vast majority of items were donated.

The total funding provided for direct services to families and individuals in need was \$120,902.00 as shown below. Office and Administrative expenses totaled \$25,980.00. Total agency expenses were \$146,881.00

The following table outlines the number of households assisted in each service category.

2018 Services Provided		
<u>Type of Assistance</u>	<u>Households Served</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Utilities	39	\$ 5,201.00
Rent/Mortgage	5	2,500.00
Emergency Home Repairs	3	426.00
Assessed Home Repairs	12	17,376.00
Medical/Dental/Vision	12	1,199.00
Food	89 households 241 visits/ 1,446 bags Estimated value: \$30,125	5,183.00
Christmas	52	2,295.00
Misc.	4	659.00
Life Skills Counseling	143	20,997.00
Education (7 categories)	80 (represents individual students - may have received asst. w/more than 1 category)	65,066.00
	Total Direct Client Services	\$120,902.00

Generated income covered all agency expenses. The Clothes House, the SMSS thrift shop, continues to be an invaluable source of income. We greatly appreciate the community's donations to The Clothes House and the regular volunteers who assist in staffing which help to keep costs down allowing us to provide the invaluable services to those in need in the community. Financially we also rely on churches, civic and school groups, community businesses, and individual donations. We are so fortunate to live in a community where our clients' needs are met so generously. All of our funding sources are critical in our mission to maximize the investments we make in our Signal Mountain families.

We look forward to a productive 2019, and to provide strategic services aimed at client stability, improvement, and self-sufficiency as we continue to develop strong relationships with our community partners, allowing client outreach to be fully encompassing.

Mary Lee Ziebold, Executive Director
Signal Mountain Social Services