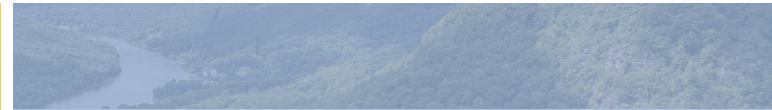
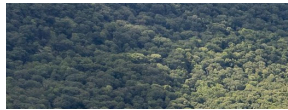
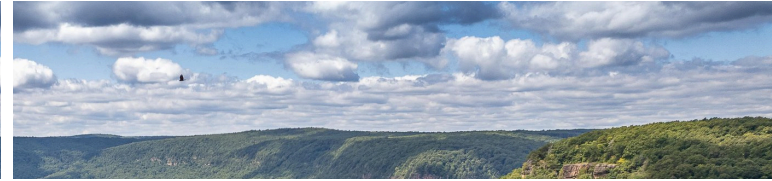




2024 Annual Report

Our Mission: We are a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to meeting the unique needs of families and individuals living within the 37377 zip code during times of financial challenge and crisis. Our longer-term focus is to provide clients the services and guidance they need to become self-reliant.



Dear Signal Mountain Friends,

This is my tenth year at SMSS and as I reflect on my time here, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and commitment that our community has shown to this organization. Together we have navigated challenges, celebrated successes, and continued our mission to serve our neighbors in need during times of financial challenge and crisis, while also focusing on the long term goal of self sufficiency.

This year has been a testament to the power of collaboration. We have witnessed the impact of our collective efforts, from outreach to program expansion. Thanks to your support, we served 174 households, making a difference in the lives of those we serve. As we moved through the year, our clients faced significant challenges, including affordable housing and food. However, it is during these times that our community shines. Your generosity, whether through volunteer hours, donations, or advocacy has enabled us to adapt and innovate, and continue providing essential services to those in need.

As you read our annual report, which highlights our programs and the stories of those we serve, I hope you are inspired to stay involved! This is crucial to our success and we hope you will continue to engage with us through volunteering or simply spreading the word about our mission. Together we can create lasting change and build a stronger, more vibrant community for all.

With appreciation,

Elizabeth Neal

Elizabeth Neal
Executive Director
Signal Mountain Social Services

2024 Community Impact



TOTAL
HOUSEHOLDS
SERVED
174

Home Repairs
19
Households

LIFE SKILLS
COUNSELING
94
HOUSEHOLDS

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

44
HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH
RENT, UTILITIES, CHILDCARE,
PRESCRIPTION COSTS, AND/OR
VEHICLE REPAIRS

SENIOR SUPPORT
25
HOUSEHOLDS

MENTAL HEALTH
GRANT
9
INDIVIDUALS

FOOD PANTRY
111 households
totaling **327** visits
1962 bags packed

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS / NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED

TUTORING (K-12): **64**

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: **120**

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SUMMER CAMPS: **47**

SCHOLARSHIPS (PRESCHOOL AND POST SECONDARY): **12**

GOOD STUDENT CLUB: **59**

Holiday Assistance

63
Households



Education

SMSS believes education is the key to a brighter future, and these programs continue to provide academic support for preschoolers through adults. The **elementary tutors** provide 1:1 sessions at the Town Library, Bachman Community Center, and the mountain schools. Our **middle / high school tutors** work in the SMMHS Learning Center so their support is easily accessible. The tutors focus on **good study habits, organization, and academic skills** to support earning a high school diploma. Meanwhile, a **mentoring** relationship forms as they work with them year after year. With this support, students are **empowered to achieve** and **graduation rates improve**. SMSS also helps high school seniors with post secondary planning and application processes.

Children are more likely to succeed when they are prepared. Our **Back to School supply program** provides supplies, backpacks, and vouchers for new shoes and clothing. The **Good Student Club** motivates our elementary aged children throughout the school year to do their best in school. This club connects our social workers with teachers and parents to help monitor the student's progress and advocate for their needs. They are rewarded with a party at the end of the year and scholarships to **summer camps, athletics, and extracurricular activities**. **These activities improve self-esteem, enhance teamwork, and foster self-confidence**. The **Birthday Buddy program** celebrates the students' birthdays with party supplies and gifts, with help from local volunteers and businesses.

Preschool scholarships are available to eligible clients to prepare them for **successful entry into Kindergarten**. **Post secondary scholarships** are awarded to students enrolled in technical through university level institutes. The scholarships are renewable, based on need. Many of these young adults are first generation higher education students, creating a **new path towards stability and independence for the next generation**.

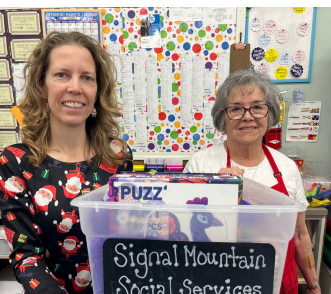
"The SMSS scholarship has fundamentally helped and allowed me to not worry about extra stresses of college, like books, supplies, and more. The staff at SMSS have only shown me unwavering kindness, and I couldn't be more pleased to work with them for all these years!"

~ SMSS scholarship recipient



SMMHS tutors

Kelsey Davis, Julia Giber,
and Rachel Page



Birthday Buddies

Life Skills Counseling

SMSS has **three social workers** who can help individuals develop essential skills needed to navigate various aspects of life effectively. This type of counseling focuses on **enhancing personal and interpersonal skills, promoting emotional well being, and fostering resilience**. It improves self esteem and empowers clients to work toward a brighter future for themselves.

"I can ONLY ever picture Sarah with a smile on her face. The amount of lives she has impacted is amazing. And without her guidance, patience, and encouragement, it probably would've taken me 5 more years to get where I've gotten in just one."

~ SMSS client

referring to Sarah Kologek, SMSS Social Worker



Mental Health Grant

This program continues to support the **well being** of our clients. It is available to anyone in the Signal Mountain community experiencing a financial barrier that prohibits **accessing mental health care or counseling**. This could be a client without reliable transportation or health insurance.

"After completing the sessions that were covered by the Mental Health Grant, I can see a decrease in my anxiety and feel a lot more confident and comfortable with myself since beginning therapy."

~ SMSS client

The Clothes House

The Clothes House is our thrift store which is staffed by **6 employees and 25 dedicated volunteers**, working hard to support the SMSS mission as our **primary funding source** and providing **vouchers to clients** in need of clothing and household items. It also offers an **affordable shopping alternative** to our community and cuts down on waste by keeping gently used items in circulation. SMSS receives high quality, desirable donations that attract shoppers from near and far!

"Time flies when you're having fun! I'm big on recycling and the thrift store allows us to provide great products at great prices, while serving our community. Volunteering at the Clothes House is enjoyable because of the great group of people and the mystery of what we will find next!"

~ Clothes House Volunteer

Emergency Assistance

The **financial assistance** program continues to be a critical component of our services and can cover the cost of **basic needs such as rent and utilities**. Assistance is based on the client's demonstrated need. **Home visits**, conducted by 1 of our 3 social workers, are customary for clients seeking financial assistance. These visits allow us to get a **clear assessment and further develop a relationship** with the client. We are then better equipped to address the emergency and strategize with clients on long term goals.

The **food pantry** continues to run smoothly with the pantry manager overseeing 25 volunteers. We have a volunteer each day of the week, packing and distributing groceries and hygiene items for clients. In 2024, **1776 bags of food** were distributed, **feeding 544 adults and 323 children**. They also receive a Pruett's voucher providing milk, eggs, butter, and cheese.

The **home repair** program **increases quality of life** and can often **prevent the risk of homelessness** for our clients. Safety concerns are addressed in clients' homes that may otherwise be delayed because of financial constraints. SMSS also matches clients with donors of **large appliances and furniture**. Partnerships with **professional crews** who volunteer their time and skills are an integral part of this program.

"I love the fact that you have social workers that actually care about families in the community. They show love and caring companionship, help with education, and it's nice to have someone to talk to about personal development. They are a great resource. They have helped me understand the importance of communicating and processing important information that I might not understand. SMSS would be a wonderful opportunity to share globally."

~SMSS client

Holiday Assistance

Over **150 members from our community** gathered at Nolan Elementary over the holidays to **pack and deliver baskets** to clients, full of donated food and gift items. SMSS also matches **sponsors** with special families in need. This is a time of year when our clients' budgets can be particularly stretched, so the assistance they receive from SMSS is a tremendous gift to these families.

Senior Assistance

Our senior clients continue to be a high priority at SMSS. They often live on a fixed income so **budgeting assistance** and **resource referrals** provided by a dedicated senior social worker is crucial to their well being. We also connect them to special volunteers who provide warm meals and visits.

"SMSS helped get my electric meter working again, connected me with a firewood ministry that delivers wood so I can heat my house, and helped me apply for the Home Uplift program who will be installing a new HVAC system soon! I really appreciate all SMSS has done to help me."

- SMSS senior client



Food Pantry



Home Repairs



Christmas Baskets



Signal Santas



Nolan and Thrasher Volunteers

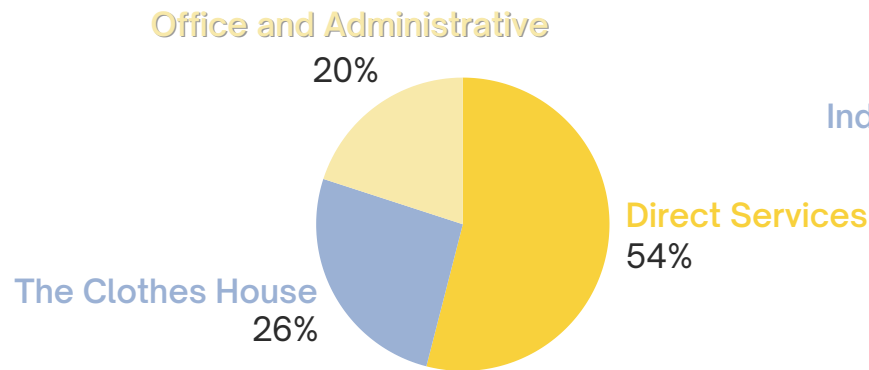


Area Captain Volunteers

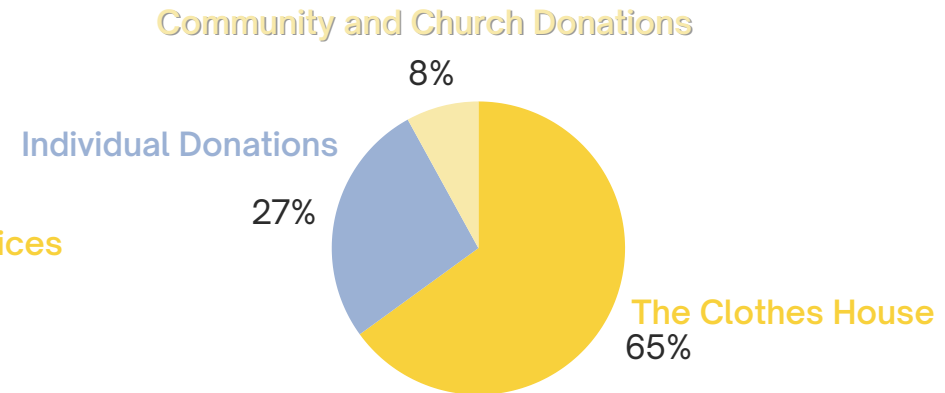


2024 Financial Profile

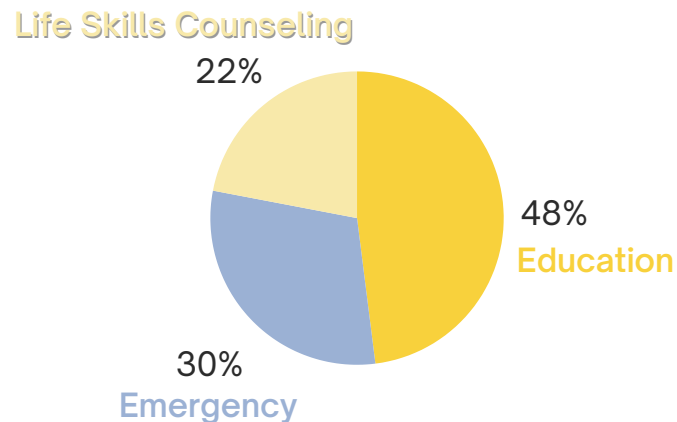
Operational Expenses



Funding Sources



Direct Services



Total agency expenses were covered by generated income. The Clothes House continues to be the primary source of income. SMSS also relies heavily on churches, civic groups, community businesses, and individual donations to maintain financial solvency. All of our funding sources and volunteers are critical in our mission to maximize the investments we make in our Signal Mountain families.

*Fiscal year ended December 31, 2024

*In Kind donations not included



The Clothes House Staff
(back row): Lisa Romanchik, Victoria Skorupa, Gina Pierce,
(front row) Debbie Massa, Amy Pate, and Carla Jones

**Lamar Rankin
Service Award
Recipients**



**Mickey Gibbs
Clothes House**



Laura Newton
with her daughters
Caroline and Kate
SMSS



SMSS Staff Marissa Stockburger (Finance), Lea Ann Marshall (Food Pantry), Elizabeth Neal (Executive Director), Mary Katharine Austin (Social Worker), Sarah Kologek (Social Worker) and Deseret Ward (Director of Development)

Thank You

As you have seen in this report, we truly could not do this work without our incredible donors, volunteers, and community partners! They assist in staffing the Clothes House and food pantry and provide direct support for clients such as home repairs, warm meal deliveries, senior visits, and assistance with special projects. The Board of Directors consists of 10 dedicated individuals offering their expertise to oversee the direction of the agency. 23 Council Members represent various community organizations and churches on the mountain and are an invaluable link to resources.

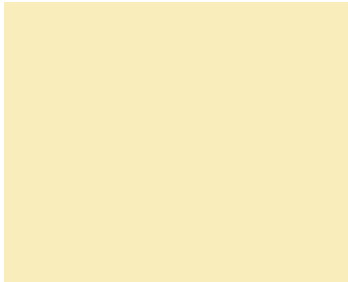
Dedicated Partners

The Town of Signal Mountain, The Mountain Arts Community Center (MACC), Nolan Elementary School, Thrasher Elementary School, Signal Mountain Middle High School, Signal Mountain Soccer League, Signal Mountain Youth Sports, Wayside Presbyterian Church, Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church and Preschool, St. Augustine Church, St. Timothy's Church and Preschool, Signal Crest Methodist Church and Preschool, Mountain Fellowship Church, Signal Mountain United Methodist Church, Signal Mountain Bible Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The Point Church, Signal Mountain Church of Christ, Mountain Fellowship Church, Mountain Ministries, Community Baptist, Signal Mountain Christian School, The Lions Club, Signal Mountain Women's Guild, The Walden's Ridge Guild, Signal Santas, The Ladies Golf Association, Moms of Preschoolers, Knights of Columbus, Signal Mountain Nursery, Pruett's Market, the Bread Basket, Panera Bread, Gigi's Sweet Shop, The Cookie Lady, Southern Star, Birthday Buddies, Ace Hardware, Tech Rescue, Signal School of PE, P-52, 35 South, Dialed in Chiropractic, Mountain Top Toys, Chatt Box Co, Signal Mountain Fire and Police, Town of Walden, Eyes on the Mountain, Welch Dental Center, and Moffatt Consulting, Inc.

Looking Ahead in 2025...

SMSS will continue to meet the unique and complex needs of our community on Signal Mountain. We look forward to a productive 2025, providing critical strategic services aimed at caring for our clients' most urgent needs and beyond. Through outreach and engagement, we are always striving to better serve our clients.

SMSS is excited to co-host our first thrift store fashion show, "Style with Purpose", to raise funds for SMSS and Bachman Community Center. Come see how affordable it can be to be fashionable, while supporting two of your local nonprofits! Stay tuned to our social media for announcements and upcoming events!



SMSS Council



SMSS Board of Directors

