



# A Community of Support

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Atin Basu  
Cathy Carlock  
Susan Cunningham  
Jon Ellestad  
Melissa Gladwell-Sayre  
Amanda Green  
Jim Kvach  
Fiorela Giraldo Prado de Lewis  
Trenya Mason  
Valerie Moliterno  
Karla Murdock  
Gordon Spice  
Daphne Stickley  
Gabrielle Tremo  
Adam Whipple

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lindsey Perez

### FOOD PANTRY

Mon, Wed, Thurs:  
2:30 - 4:30pm  
Saturday:  
10:00am - Noon

*Food donations can be made at  
any time!*

### HELPLINE

Monday through Thursday  
9:30am - Noon  
1:00 - 4:00pm

*New applications only accepted  
between 9:30 and noon or by  
appointment.  
(540) 463-6642*

### ROCKBRIDGE AREA RELIEF ASSOCIATION

350 Spotswood Drive  
PO Box 640  
Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463-6943  
office@raralex.org

*RARA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit  
organization.*



**In 2021, circumstances surrounding the City of Lexington's discussion of the Spotswood property prompted us to think deeply about RARA's future, mission, and role in our community.** Despite the inevitable anxiety a potential change in location provoked, we chose to look upon it as an opportunity for creative solutions. We realized that no matter our physical site, the community need will persist, but how well we are able to meet that need is highly dependent upon our location. We thus came to the conclusion that the optimal outcome for RARA was to purchase the Piovano Building, and thanks to the generous support of our neighbors, we were able to do so without decreasing funding available for programming.

Owning the building allows RARA to establish a permanent, stable home in the heart of our community, but it also offers so much more. With ownership, we imagine investing considerable resources to transform it into a collaborative space focused on client needs in a way that empowers many area agencies to accelerate our collective efforts to better address community health outcomes. Furthermore, it allows us to maintain the stability of our programming and ease of access for clients and volunteers.

Now that we are secure where we are, the current economic situation underscores just how important that stability is, and we are as committed as ever to our core programming. As federal and statewide pandemic assistance decreased in 2021, families still need help to get back on their feet so they can be self-sufficient in the future. We have dedicated additional funding to assist people in catching up on their bills. This increase is especially evident in our HelpLine, with more people receiving emergency rent and utility assistance than ever before. The ongoing support of this community is crucial as we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2022 and look forward to the next fifty years.



*Valerie Moliterno*

Valerie Moliterno  
Board President

*Lindsey Pérez*

Lindsey Perez  
Executive Director

# UNDERSTAND

Everyone deserves help when they need it, and no two people experience the exact same circumstances. We have the expertise and relationships to listen carefully and connect our neighbors to the resources that will best serve them.



Launched the website *RockbridgeFeeds.org* with area partners to decrease barriers to food access



Participated in the Valley Homeless Connection and Live Healthy Rockbridge coalitions in support of regional health, food, and housing needs

# SECURE

Everyone deserves warm, safe shelter. We help our neighbors stay in their homes and assist with emergency utilities, shelter, and transportation.



**2,260**  
individuals assisted



**200**  
evictions prevented



**588**  
utilities kept on



**255**  
nights of emergency shelter provided

# NOURISH

Everyone deserves healthy, flavorful food. We ensure our neighbors have access to enough to eat.



**307+**  
tons of food distributed



**3,506**  
individuals served



**6,957**  
Food Pantry visits

# ENRICH

Everyone deserves to live a full life by connecting with others, learning and growing, and caring for their own wellbeing. Through our programming, we offer our neighbors more than the basic necessities.



Shared **9,790** pounds of produce with free community markets



Distributed Thanksgiving turkeys at **11** different sites



# WE ♥ VOLUNTEERS

Although the true value of RARA's volunteers cannot be adequately measured, we had more people join us than ever before last year, assisting with everything from operating our drive-thru to implementing a new HelpLine database. We are incredibly thankful for their continued support to help our neighbors in need. Please visit raralex.org to learn how you can become a part of this wonderful team of volunteers.

**485+**  
active volunteers

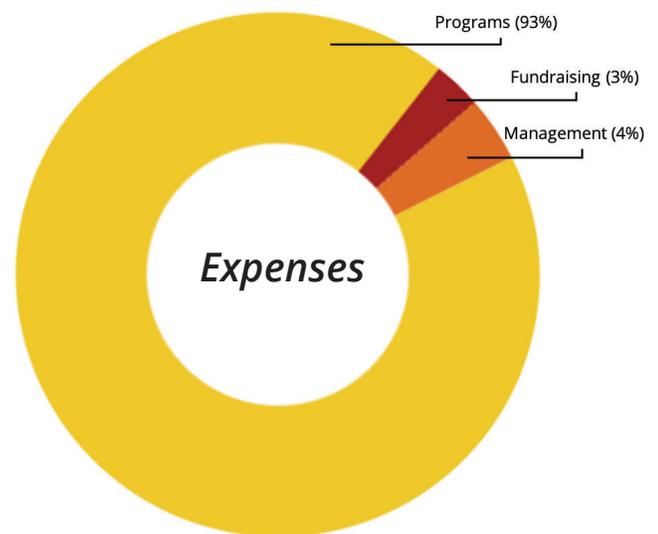
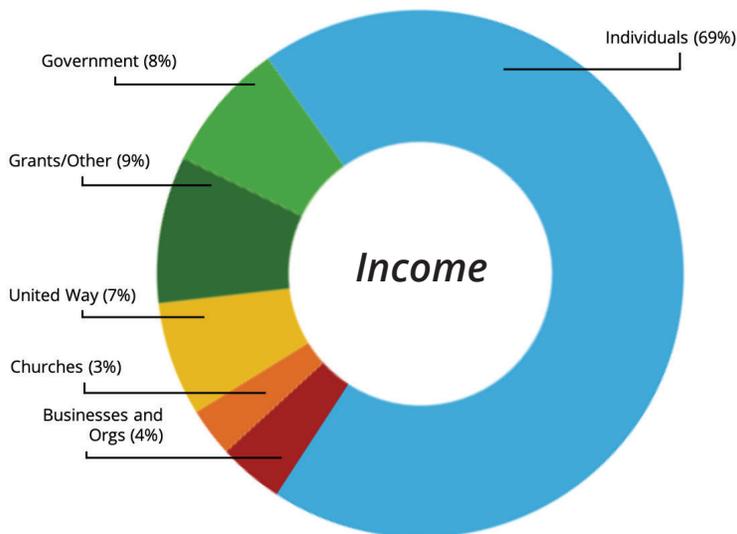
**7,900**  
hours volunteered,  
valued at \$225,480

## SHINING A LIGHT ON HOUSING

For much of the pandemic, families received additional federal and statewide assistance in the form of unemployment benefits, stimulus checks, and eviction and utility cut-off moratoriums. These benefits allowed them to pay bills that could not wait but did not provide enough support to cover every expense while they were without work or childcare. When that aid stopped, RARA saw a significant increase in the amount of requests to our HelpLine and how much people owed on their bills. Between the first and last quarters of 2021, the number of cases we assisted with increased by 30% and expenses by 42%. We expect this high volume to extend into 2022 as families catch up on large utility bills and rent payments. RARA is as dedicated as ever to support local families during this time of need and for many years to come, and we rely on the generosity of our community to do so.



## FINANCE



**Thank you for your generosity!** Whether you donated \$1 or \$1,000, whether you're an individual, business, church, or agency, your contributions to RARA have been immeasurable. Your help allowed us to secure a stable home for the future while meeting the high demand for emergency assistance. You're not just keeping the lights on or food on the table, you're giving dignity and respect. Thank you! For detailed financial information (IRS form 990), visit [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), or call RARA.



**Rockbridge Area Relief Association**

350 Spotswood Drive  
PO Box 640, Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463-6943  
raralex.org

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PERMIT

Ms. Jane Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Homestead, VA 12345

*Special thanks to our strategic partners*



**Blue Ridge Area  
FOOD BANK**



# EXCITING THINGS TO COME!

**50th Anniversary:**

RARA is celebrating 50 years of being here for our community in times of need. We'll mark the occasion by highlighting where we've been and our vision for the future throughout the year.

**New Branding:**

Keep an eye out for a refreshed logo, website, and other materials at the end of the summer!

**Save the Date:**

Mark your calendars for a celebration of RARA on Saturday, April 29th, 2023 from 5-8pm.

**Sprucing Up:**

We've already started small projects to improve our building, and we've hired an architect to redesign the Food Pantry for a more comfortable shopping experience!



**Did you know?**

*RARA started in 1972 with a group of women sitting around a kitchen table to support their neighbors in need. We've been in various locations since then and finally came to the Piovano Building in 2011.*