

2021

# IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



**HOME  
REPAIR  
SERVICES**

RESOURCES FOR  
HOMEOWNERS

## MISSION

Home Repair Services strengthens vulnerable Kent County homeowners because strong homeowners build strong communities.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# MEASURING THE “WHY” DURING A PANDEMIC

Dear Friend,

I like to view vision statements as the residue of mission – what gets left behind because of an organization’s presence, work, or activity. In reflecting on the past year through the lens of our vision statement, *Confident homeowners enjoying vibrant communities*, I wondered if the residue of our work was derailed by a global pandemic. After all, feelings of *confidence*, *enjoyment*, *vibrancy*, and *community* seemed to be in short supply.

However, a closer look showed otherwise.

**Confidence:** Each year we conduct a survey that includes a question measuring homeowner confidence among our clients. This year’s survey revealed surprisingly high overall numbers including the highest

ever recorded confidence levels for senior aged homeowners.

**Enjoyment:** Whether it was help with a desperately needed repair or our role in catalyzing a new DIY kitchen, month after month, we received joy-filled notes from grateful clients.

**Vibrancy:** While the traditional measures of vibrancy shifted as offices and cafes emptied and public gatherings went on hiatus, we witnessed neighborhoods across Kent County come to life as people got out and walked, biked, used parks, and most importantly, talked with their neighbors.

**Community:** The HRS “communities” of staff, volunteers, donors, and partners all came together to ensure that our “community” of

clients could successfully navigate this unprecedented pandemic. Their collective efforts ensured that access to a safe and secure dwelling remained a phone call away.

So, while the world looked and felt different, I do believe we made progress toward our lofty vision. Homeowners of all backgrounds, abilities, and resources tasted confidence and got to experience forms of a vibrant community – to the benefit of **everyone**.

The following pages reveal expressions of the mission and work of Home Repair Services. I invite you to take a few moments to read, reflect, and rejoice in this good work and its resulting “residue.” We thank you for your continued interest and participation in this unique nonprofit.

Together, we continue to unlock the power of homeownership and bring hope through opportunity.

**Joel Ruiter** | Executive Director

P.S. I do wish to draw your attention to one quite remarkable measurable – the 1639 jobs our Repair Team completed last year. What an amazing accomplishment given the many challenges that came with COVID-19. That number was more than recent years with no pandemic to deal with. It took considerable courage by our team, but also on the part of our clients. I salute them both!



From L to R: BJ Jordan (20), Judy Jordan (20), Bob Hengeveld (41), Jim Lynch (32), David Scheidel (33), Dave Jacobs (34), Tracie Coffman (14), Meri Watkins-Tolbert (20)

The above photo was recently taken at the annual HRS Picnic. These eight worked (or are still working) at Home Repair Services for a combined 173 years! This past year, we celebrated the retirement of five incredible servants who made life better for thousands of homeowners. **Thank You!**

**Maureen Martin – 16 years**  
Finance Manager

**B.J. Jordan – 20 years**  
Self-Help Program Manager

**Judy Jordan – 20 years**  
Education Coordinator

**Darrin Lucas – 20 years**  
Office and Human Resources Manager

**Bob Hengeveld – 41 years**  
Repair Program Manager



# STRONGER HOMES



## MAJOR & MINOR REPAIR PROGRAMS

- 1639** Health & Safety jobs completed
- 243** Furnaces repaired or replaced
- 163** Roofs repaired or replaced
- 113** Electrical repairs
- 54** Main drain cleanouts
- 122** Water Heaters repaired or replaced
- 466** General plumbing & drains



## ACCESS RAMPS

- 25** Home access ramps built
- 6** Labor donated by HBA members



## BATHROOM MODIFICATIONS

- 42** Bathrooms modified
- 58** New toilets installed
- 50** Safety grab bars installed



# 2556 HOMES IMPACTED

## OUR CLIENTS

### RACE

African American	43%
Hispanic	10%
Other	1%
White	46%

Female – headed household	51%
Clients aged 60 or greater	70%
Veteran Households	75
Median tenure in current home	19 years

**Average Income** **\$22,194**

2021

Resourceful Homeowner  
Award recipient:

José Capeles

STRONGER

HOMEOWNERS





## HOUSING COUNSELING & FINANCIAL EDUCATION

- 19 Foreclosure counseling sessions\*
- 8 Homeowners assisted with property tax designations
- 51 Teaching sessions held via Zoom Webinar
- 351 Unique "attendees" joined a financial workshop – up 280%

\* A federal foreclosure moratorium was in place for the entire year. It lifted on July 31, 2021.



## THE FIX-IT SCHOOL

- 6 Live stream workshops with Kent District Libraries
- 32 *Toolbox Tips* videos produced
- 23 Households completed a cabinet installation session
- 1997 Views of livestream workshops
- 11,826 Views of *Toolbox Tips* videos



## HOME MAINTENANCE CHECK-UPS

- 24 Inspections completed
- 50% Inspections for seniors
- 90% Inspections where a critical health & safety repair was identified
- 400 Inspections completed since program inception in 2015



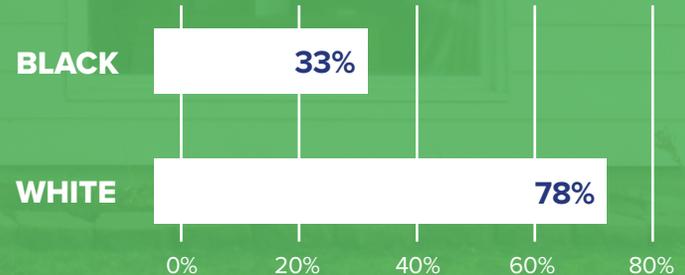
## REMODELING TOGETHER

- 31 New DIY kitchens completed
- 23 Projects assisted by HRS remodeling coach
- 287 Kitchens have been completed since program inception in 2011

## INCREASING GAP IN FAMILY WEALTH



## METROPOLITAN GRAND RAPIDS HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE BY RACE



## STORIES FROM HOME: BUILDING STRONG HOMES

There is perhaps nothing more vulnerable in the life of a homeowner than waking up on a frigid winter day to a cold house and a furnace that won't respond. Home Repair Services responded to 243 of these occasions last year – anxious homeowners with no heat – including Ernest Pierson, a Sparta area senior.

Ernie's case was more complicated than most. He had a boiler system that was powered by fuel-oil. These types of systems are rare these days and often make for tricky repairs. They are also expensive to replace. Worse for Ernie, the boiler was also leaking fuel-oil on to the basement floor creating a hazard for the whole home.

Ernie reached out to HRS with hopes the unit could be repaired. HRS Repair Team Manager, John Guichelaar, started down that path but soon experienced just how challenging these aging boilers can be. “We tried to fix the boiler by replacing the fuel pump, but every time we thought we had it, we found another part that had to be

replaced! We finally decided it was too far gone and the prudent move was to replace it.”

John went on, “The silver lining of installing a new boiler was that we could install a 95% energy efficient unit and it also gave Ernie the option of switching to propane.” Fully recognizing how challenging his job was, Ernie is profoundly grateful to all those who helped make it possible. “Because of HRS, I now have reliable heat, I no longer have to deal with fuel oil in my basement, and I am saving money on fuel costs each month. It was a triple win!”

Funding for Ernie's project came through a unique partnership that HRS enjoys with Senior Neighbors with funding from the Home Depot Foundation. This special collaboration supports veterans and spouses aged 60 and over. In recalling his days in the Air Force, Ernie's face lights up, “I was a mechanic, and my job was very busy when I was on the ground, but it was very relaxing when I was flying on a mission.”



# STORIES FROM HOME: BUILDING STRONG HOMEOWNERS

This past year, Home Repair Services began teaching a financial curriculum called Financial Capabilities. Presented in a multi-session format, participants learn about budgeting, financial goal setting, how to improve and manage credit, fair housing laws, insurance, and more. Those who complete the required educational units receive a certificate of completion which then can be applied to various housing programs, including down payment assistance for the purchase of a home.

In describing how the workshops are effective, Alisa Flores, Housing Counseling & Financial Education Program Manager, explains, “The students come motivated by the incentives they can earn, but they also enjoy the material and how we teach it. We try to help them connect ways they are already using money management techniques. We also try to provide a learning space that makes it safe to talk about money in a more open and real way. For many, they

did not grow up in households that really talked about money, strategies, or budgeting.”

For Lonae, a 62-year-old African American attendee, earning her certificate through HRS proved to be a game changer. “Everything came together for me, and I was able purchase my own home,” she shared with pride. Her cozy ranch style home on Grand Rapids’ west side sits on a large lot, has a fenced in back yard, and is only a block from one of the city’s recreational jewels – Richmond Park. The home was made available by our friends at Inner City Christian Federation as part of their community land trust – an innovative approach to ensuring that our community will retain affordable housing for future homeowners like Lonae.

When news of Lonae’s home purchase reached HRS, the Financial Education team was elated. Alisa commented, “What joyful news! Lonae is a perfect example of one of

the goals of financial education – to become a homeowner. I’m glad we get to be part of that journey with her and others. I am also glad to be part of an organization that can help her stay a homeowner.”



HOME REPAIR SERVICES  
MSHDA Certified Counseling Agency  
A Michigan Nonprofit Corporation

## CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

*This is to certify that*

*Has successfully completed our*

**Financial Capabilities Series**

As recommended prior to applying for local home ownership programs.  
CONGRATULATIONS!

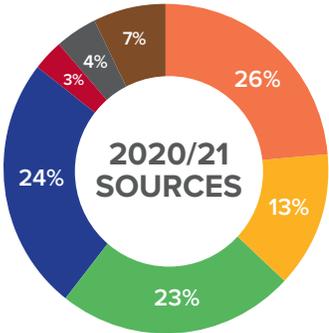
*Alisa Flores*

Alisa Flores  
Housing Educator

*August 21, 2021*

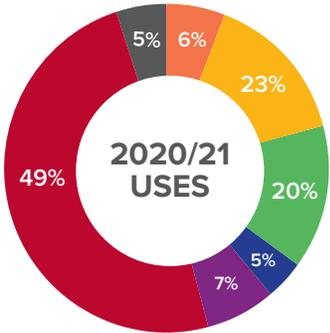
Date of Completion

# THE IMPACT OF RESOURCES | VOLUNTEERS



**\$3,295,082**

- FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
- CLIENTS
- STATE & COUNTY FUNDS
- FEDERAL HUD FUNDS
- OTHER FED FUNDS (PPP)
- DONATED GOODS & SERVICES
- UTILITY COMPANY REBATES
- ENDOWMENT INCOME & RESERVES



**\$3,295,082**

- HOUSING COUNSELING & FINANCIAL EDUCATION
- REMODELING TOGETHER
- WEATHERIZATION & FURNACES
- HOME ACCESS RAMPS
- BATH MODIFICATIONS
- CASH RESERVES
- HEALTH & SAFETY REPAIRS



**WE WERE PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL TO BE AWARDED \$50,000 FROM TCF BANK (NOW HUNTINGTON BANK) IN SUPPORT OF OUR HOUSING COUNSELING AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

This very generous support helped us to nearly triple the number of financial education students as well as it ensured we'd have adequate staff to meet ongoing demand for foreclosure counseling.

Join the **Change Makers** of Home Repair Services and donate monthly to make a lasting impact in the lives of homeowners all year long. Signing up is easy and convenient. Best of all, your monthly gifts will fund important efforts that help keep homeowners safe, have financial freedom, and learn skills to improve and maintain their homes.



Over \$12,300 in monthly gifts benefited clients last year – change starts at: <https://bit.ly/HRSChangeMaker>



## LEAVE A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Please consider including HRS in your estate plan with a planned gift.

To learn more, contact Director of Development, Dustie Wiggins, at [dwiggins@homerepairservices.org](mailto:dwiggins@homerepairservices.org) or (616) 241-2601 ext. 223.



## Volunteers Build Strong Communities

While the pandemic certainly altered volunteering at HRS, it didn't stop it! From our cabinet shop crew to our ramp building regulars, we collectively – and safely – made our community a better place.

To learn more about volunteering at Home Repair Services, visit our website at [www.homerepairservices.org](http://www.homerepairservices.org) and click on the volunteer tab.

Follow us  
on social media.



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**616.241.2601**



CITY OF  
GRAND  
RAPIDS



*Living*  
Michigan

*Kent County  
Senior Millage*