

BREAKING GROUND

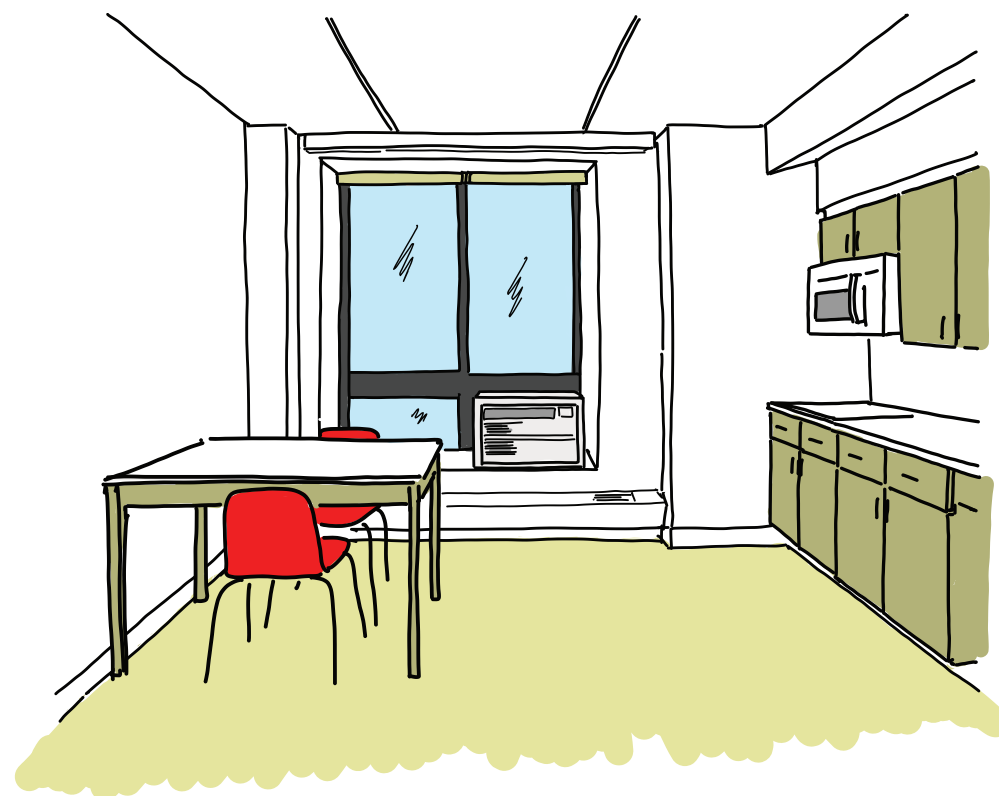
BUILDING AND
RESTORING LIVES

BUILDING THE FUTURE

2019
ANNUAL
REPORT

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Home can be so simple.

Studio Apartment at Boston Road in the Bronx

*On the cover:
Lobby entrance of La Central (opened in 2019), located in the Melrose section of the Bronx.*

OUR MISSION

Breaking Ground's mission is to strengthen individuals, families and communities by developing and sustaining exceptional supportive and affordable housing as well as programs for homeless and other vulnerable New Yorkers.

OUR VALUES

Compassion

We meet each person where they are and treat them with dignity and respect.

Patience

We take the time to build trust – with people and communities.

Persistence

We never give up, on anyone.

BUILDING and RESTORING LIVES

Breaking Ground employs a range of initiatives designed to enable people to forever escape the trauma of homelessness. Our approach ensures that services are tailored to the needs and circumstances of each individual on the path to finding a permanent home. Some people will move directly into permanent housing from the street, and we do whatever it takes to make this placement possible, as quickly as possible. For others, transitional housing provides an interim step – safe and clean accommodations with onsite supportive services – where each person can begin to establish stability and work toward the goal of obtaining permanent housing.

Home is more than just four walls and a roof. At Breaking Ground, home means a support system. Across our supportive housing portfolio, onsite wraparound services enable each person to get – and stay – on the path to permanent stability:

- **Benefits assistance**
- **Medical care**
- **Mental health care**
- **Substance abuse referrals**
- **Skills-building and self-sufficiency programs, including connection to employment services**

OUR PROGRAMS

24 · 7 · 365

STREET OUTREACH

**in Brooklyn, Queens
& Midtown Manhattan**

Engagement and counseling outdoors, where men and women live on the streets, to get them out of harm's way and into the continuum of services that enable them to transform their lives.

DROP-IN CENTER

Pilot program in Ozone Park, Queens

Currently serving approximately 16 people at any given time, the Drop-In Center is undergoing construction, with a goal of fully realizing operational capacity (up to 75 persons at any given time) by 2022. Eventually, we plan to open additional Safe Haven units

307

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS

Our Safe Havens provide secure temporary housing, along with intensive onsite case management for individuals in the most precarious circumstances. This allows each person the space, time and assistance they need to work on securing permanent housing.

3,800

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Through 20 residences and 171 "Scatter Site" apartments - all with access to support services as needed - we provide the security that enables formerly homeless and low-income New Yorkers to make a lasting home.

Letter from Our Leaders



As we began to reflect on Breaking Ground's accomplishments in 2019 and the new decade ahead, the COVID-19 public health crisis disrupted our lives and work in ways never imagined. We are in a time of great uncertainty and may not know the full effects of our current operating environment for months, if not years.

But one thing is certain – Breaking Ground is steadfast in our mission. We continue to provide essential programs and housing for those who need it most, permanently breaking the cycle of homelessness for extremely vulnerable New Yorkers. Now more than ever, our purpose of enabling disadvantaged populations to have a home, and to forge a stronger link between housing and health is of vital importance.

The courage and dedication of our staff and partners in every circumstance, including when New York is suffering through a frightening pandemic, drive our progress, and because of this we've been able to make home a reality for more and more homeless New Yorkers year after year.

In 2019, Breaking Ground served more than 8,300 people. Our street outreach and transitional housing programs alone helped 413 homeless New Yorkers leave the streets and move into transitional and permanent housing.

More than 750 volunteers, including groups from 36 different corporate partners, gave their personal time and talents to serve our tenants and improve our buildings.



Last year saw several milestones in new housing development: we opened a new supportive residence, La Central, in the South Bronx that is now home to 161 formerly homeless and low-income New Yorkers; we topped off Edwin's Place, marking more than 50% of its construction to create 125 new apartments in which homeless and low-income families, veterans, and individuals can achieve stability and a decent quality of life; we broke ground on Betances Senior Residence, our first project expected to achieve the Passive House standard of sustainability, that will be home to formerly homeless and low-income seniors; and we applied for a zoning amendment to retrofit our 90 Sands Street project in DUMBO, Brooklyn into 500 supportive and affordable apartments in one of the city's most expensive neighborhoods.

We enter our 30th year, and a new decade, proud of the enormous strides made to expand our reach across the five boroughs and resolved to advance the recognition of supportive housing as the key to solving long-term street homelessness.

Thanks to you and our entire community of supporters many more New Yorkers will come indoors, restore their lives, protect their health, and build a more secure future in housing.

Sincerely,

Brenda E. Rosen
President and CEO

Michael J. Franco
Chair, Board of Directors

4,107 UNITS

3,800 PERMANENT APARTMENTS

307 TRANSITIONAL UNITS

413 NEW PLACEMENTS TO HOUSING*

\$91.7M BUDGET

8,302 TOTAL PEOPLE HELPED**

2,840 CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

2,481 LOW-INCOME ADULTS & FAMILIES

1,777 MENTALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS

1,515 SENIORS

229 VETERANS

420 PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

165 YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS



Studio Apartment at the Hegeman in Brooklyn

Breaking Down Barriers OUR REACH

PERMANENT RESIDENCES

MANHATTAN	1	40 Riverside
	2	The Christopher
	3	The Dorothy Ross Friedman
	4	The Lee
	5	Prince George
	6	Times Square
BROOKLYN	7	90 Sands (2021)
	8	The Domenech
	9	Edwin's Place (2020)
	10	Hegeman
	11	Redwood Senior Living
BRONX	12	Schermerhorn
	13	Boston Road
	14	Brook
	15	La Central
	16	Lenniger
	17	Park House
	18	Sydelle
	19	Webster

Permanent Residences outside NYC
(not shown on map)

CONNECTICUT	20	Cedarwoods (in Wilmantic)
	21	The Betty Ruth & Milton B. Hollander Foundation Ctr (in Hartford)
ROCHESTER, NY	22	Eastman Commons

TRANSITIONAL RESIDENCES

MANHATTAN	23	The Andrews Safe Haven
BROOKLYN	24	East Flatbush Safe Haven
	25	Midwood Safe Haven
QUEENS	26	Queens Drop-In Center



STREET OUTREACH

More than 150 Breaking Ground outreach staff are engaging with people who are experiencing street homelessness, connecting them with vital services, and helping them to get on the path toward housing.

4,016

Served (includes episodically homeless individuals and referrals to shelter/drop-in center)

1,499

On caseload, working with us toward permanent housing

464

Placements to transitional or permanent housing

DROP-IN-CENTER

A small pilot program currently serving approximately 16 people per day, the drop-in center is a safe, welcoming space where people can come indoors for meals, mental health and medical care, and help with housing. Currently under construction, we expect to reach full capacity of serving 75 people per day by 2021.

372

Served (includes episodically homeless individuals and referrals to shelter/drop-in center)

59

On caseload, working with us towards permanent housing

22

Placements to transitional or permanent housing

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Breaking Ground's transitional housing programs meet the immediate needs of homeless individuals, while keeping our focus on the most important outcome for each person – to find permanent, affordable housing.

307

Units

530

People served

94

Placements to permanent housing



"That day was the beginning of a new life. As a matter of fact, it was the beginning of life."

Daniel Broome grew up in Brooklyn. An only child, he describes his early years as a very sheltered life. After dropping out of high school in the 11th grade, he started getting mixed up with drugs, and spent several small bouts incarcerated.

As his dependence on substances grew, his life started to fall apart. His wife divorced him. His daughter moved to Georgia. And he found himself living on the streets of Brooklyn. When Breaking Ground outreach teams discovered him, he was reluctant to engage at first. But over time he grew to trust the teams, who eventually helped him move directly from the street into Breaking Ground's Boston Road residence in the Bronx.

Today he is thriving. After conquering his own addiction, he signed up to become a substance abuse counselor - and soon he'll be reaching out to people and offering them the same chance he had to make a new life.

Photo: Daniel Broome on the roof terrace of 90 Sands.

La Central Welcomes First Tenants

In October of 2019, nearly 100 people joined us to celebrate the completion of La Central in the Melrose section of the Bronx. La Central features 161 units – 97 for formerly homeless individuals and persons living with HIV/AIDS, and 64 for low-income working adults making at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. The building features ultra-efficient fixtures and water-saving appliances, a green roof and landscaped roof terrace, and roof-mounted solar panels that will provide energy savings and reduce reliance on municipal energy supply. La Central was designed by FXCollaborative and MHG Architects.

This Breaking Ground supportive residence is part of the larger La Central development, which was originally announced by the City of New York in December 2013. The multi-property La Central development brings nearly 1,000 units of mixed-income affordable housing built in phases to the Bronxchester Urban Renewal site. Bordered by Bergen Avenue, Brook Avenue and East 149th Street, La Central will encompass five buildings of mixed-income affordable housing, along with a host of retail, community and recreation spaces. The remainder of the project is being developed and managed by partners BRP Development Corporation, Hudson Companies Inc., The Kretchmer Companies, ELH Mgmt LLC, and the YMCA of Greater New York.

When complete, the full 1.1 million-square-foot La Central development will consist of a 50,000-square-foot state-of-the-art YMCA, a new home for BronxNet Television Studios, a public skate park, and a rooftop telescope operated by the Bronx High School of Science. La Central will include new community and retail space to serve residents and the surrounding neighborhoods. Breaking Ground's building is the first to complete construction at this major community revitalization project.



*Above: La Central's exterior at 152nd Street and Bergen Avenue.
Bottom: La Central's landscaped rooftop terrace.*

Edwin's Place Tops Off, Nears 70% Completion

Persistence is a core value at Breaking Ground. Long after others may have given up, we are still pushing toward the finish line with our projects. Edwin's Place, our newest development in Brownsville, Brooklyn, is a prime example of this principle in practice. We have been at work on the site since 2014, patiently shepherding it through New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), and surviving a number of challenges that threatened funding. We look forward to welcoming 125 formerly homeless and low-income households – including veterans and families with children – to their new homes beginning in the late summer of 2020. Edwin's Place is designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects.



Above: Progress at Edwin's Place as viewed from Howard Avenue in Brownsville.



Celebrating Home & Community Gala Raises \$2.5 million for programs and housing

More than 700 supporters joined us at Cipriani 42nd Street for our annual Celebrating Home & Community Gala on October 17, 2019. We honored two extraordinary individuals who have had an indelible impact on the health and housing needs of vulnerable New Yorkers – Michael J. Dowling, President and CEO of Northwell Health and Vicki Been, New York City's Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development. Learn more and watch the honorees' inspiring speeches at: <https://breakingground.org/gala2019>.

Our supporters and donors helped us raise \$2.5 million in crucial philanthropic support for our street outreach, drop-in center, and transitional housing programs that serve the most vulnerable homeless New Yorkers.

In the Zone at 90 Sands Street

In August of 2018, Breaking Ground completed the acquisition of the former Watchtower Society Residences at 90 Sands Street in DUMBO, to transform the building into 100% affordable and supportive apartments. In order to carry out our plans, and maximize the amount of supportive and affordable housing at the site, we needed to utilize the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) for a zoning amendment. With support from Brooklyn Community Board 2, NYC Councilmember Stephen Levin (District 33), and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, we expect our application to be approved in 2020.

Of the 498 apartments at 90 Sands, 202 will be affordable to a wide range of New Yorkers, from extremely low-income to moderate-income households, and 305 will be reserved for individuals who are exiting homelessness. The building will feature a 24-hour attended lobby, sophisticated security systems, multipurpose room for community events and meetings, a digital library, a fitness room, and a redesigned street-level public plaza. Our long standing partners at the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) will provide onsite social services.

We will seek to bring in community and arts organizations to utilize the cellar level commercial spaces. Beyer, Blinder, Bell is our project architect for interior work; W Architecture & Landscaping is reimagining the outdoor plaza at Jay & Sands Streets.

Upon completion, 90 Sands will be the second-largest supportive housing site in the country, after our Times Square residence.

Photo Left to Right: Philip Silverman (BG Board Member), Honoree Michael Dowling, Brenda Rosen (BG President & CEO), Honoree Vickie Been, Michael Franco (BG Board Chair)



Breaking Ground at Betances Senior Residence in the Bronx

More than 50 people including representatives of partner agencies from the City and State, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the AFL-CIO Housing Trust Fund, and local elected officials joined us to break ground on Betances Senior Residence in September 2019. Located in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx, Betances will be home to low-income and formerly homeless seniors, including a number of tenants from nearby NYCHA developments, freeing up much needed public housing units for families. A community space on the ground floor will be utilized by Dream Yard Project as an arts and educational resource for Bronx youth.

Betances will also be Breaking Ground's first building designed to achieve Passive House certification. This extremely rigorous energy use standard will help us achieve near zero net emissions at the residence standard for the future of green building in supportive housing across New York City. Betances was designed by the renowned COOKFOX Architects, with Passive House consultation by Steven Winter Associates.

Photo Above: Progress at Betances Senior Residence in the Bronx.

Data and Technology Enhancements



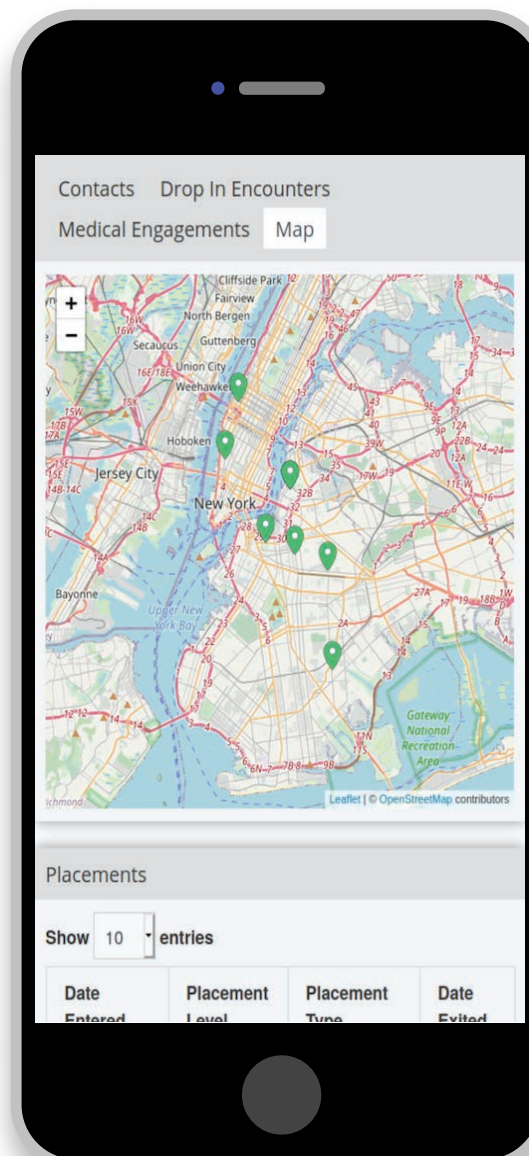
“Put simply, the goal is to help more people, in better ways.”

Jaclyn Sawyer, Director of Data Services

Technological advancements are accelerating at a staggering rate. Estimates show that 90%+ of the data in the world was created in just the past few years, and companies and governments are racing to implement new technologies that can leverage data like artificial intelligence (AI). But how can human services nonprofits like Breaking Ground harness the promise of these technologies to benefit our constituents and communities?

At Breaking Ground, we’ve been collecting and analyzing data for nearly 30 years as part of our mandate to help people avoid and overcome homelessness – increasingly so over the past decade as we have taken on ever-greater street outreach and transitional housing responsibilities, not to mention doubling our permanent supportive housing units under management.

Over the years, Breaking Ground’s reach has grown to serve over 8,000 vulnerable New Yorkers annually, including chronically homeless individuals living on the streets, sometimes for decades. But our growth outpaced the capacity of our data management systems, which had become unwieldy. In 2017, agency leadership recognized that these trends in service growth and data management complexity would require new, dedicated investment to upgrade our technological systems. The mandate to our data management team over the next two years was to not only create efficiencies in our data collection and analysis capabilities but to do so in ways that create meaningful advances in how our frontline staff can deliver services with hopefully greater than ever impact.



Fortunately, new technologies - the pivot to cloud-based applications and the increasing need for data security - presented an exceptional opportunity to unlock the value of the information we collect for our staff, partners in government and other nonprofits, and our clients. As Jaclyn Sawyer, Breaking Ground’s Director of Data Services, put it, “the goal is to help more people, in better ways.” Culminating in 2019, Breaking Ground’s data teams met their mandate through the most significant upgrade of our data management systems in the agency’s three-decade history. The process to achieve this outcome was both deliberate and intensive.

We utilized exercises through which social workers imagined how a new database framework could impact their clients. Our partner technologists and data practitioners were asked to slow down their typical pace of new product development so that we could discover more than the basic end-user needs. Ultimately, this shared endeavor among project stakeholders helped build mutual understanding and a common language in order to better grapple with the difficult questions surrounding how to represent people as data points. By bringing together computer scientists, social workers, and data practitioners, our colleagues collaboratively designed a brand new program database for homeless outreach workers. And, our diversity of perspectives helped us achieve a fully formed system with more understandable – and more useful – outputs. As the iterative process of building new systems became easier, the team found they could begin to tell real life stories from data points. Most importantly, the new database could be scaled to mobile device applications, allowing frontline outreach workers to access and enter data in the field.

A view of the mobile-optimized application for Breaking Ground’s outreach teams. The app allows for real-time data entry and access to important information about clients on the street.

Data and Technology Enhancements (CONTINUED)



Concurrently, the team was hard at work to create and implement a data warehouse – a central hub for our various databases and inputs that has the potential to unleash powerful analytical tools.

Today, thanks to this two-year effort, Breaking Ground program staff can access custom dashboards that provide real-time access to analytics. Direct services staff are able to capture more of the data that matters, and data and program leadership are able to discover new insights about the most effective interventions for our clients, whether still homeless or formerly homeless and in supportive housing.

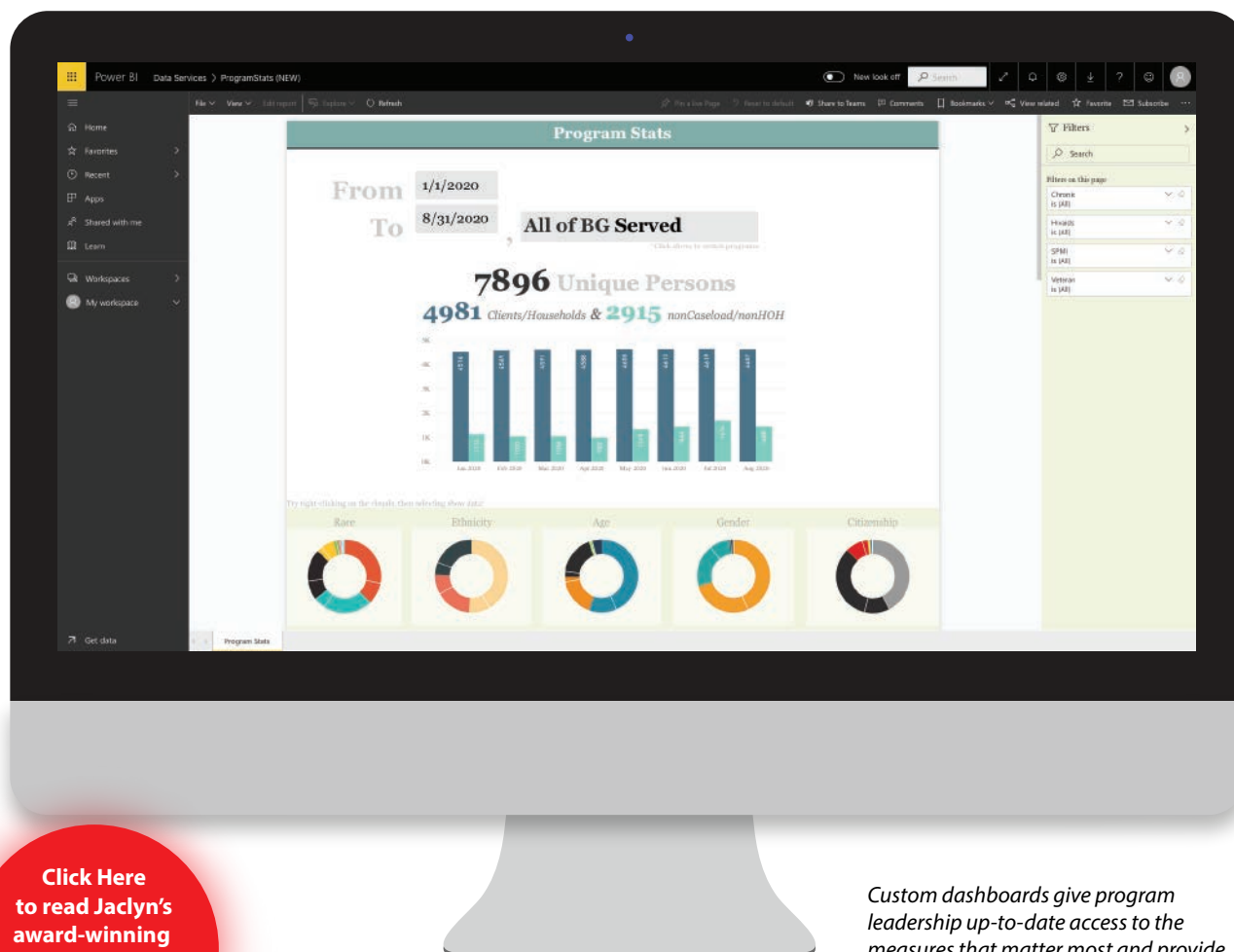
In a recent essay, Jaclyn Sawyer summed up how social work and technology can work together to ensure the tools we use keep the people we serve at the center of our work, writing that “the power of [social work] lies in its unusual mix of systems thinking and heart. Social work brings dynamic thinking to some of the stickiest human problems, courage to tough conversations, and warmth to the process of making change on the individual and group level. This human-centered tenacity builds the bones of a new technological era.”

The collection of data – and use of technology to store and analyze it – must be in the service of our clients and contribute to social progress. With a strong framework in place, that’s exactly what our Data Services and Programs teams are empowered to do together.

Breaking Ground’s Data Consolidation and Enhancement Program received generous support from leading corporations and foundations, including:

Alliance Data Systems
Hearst Foundations
MetLife Foundation
New York Community Trust
Robin Hood Foundation

[Click Here to read Jaclyn’s award-winning essay at MIT’s Journal of Design and Science](#)



Custom dashboards give program leadership up-to-date access to the measures that matter most and provide key insights on allocating resources to best serve vulnerable clients and tenants.

After More Than a Decade, Dignity Restored

Jeff Peronel is a man of few words, but his quiet ways belie a strength and resilience that saw him through homelessness on the streets of Brooklyn. And if you speak to staff at The Christopher, a Breaking Ground supportive residence where he lives, his transformation since moving in is astonishing.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Jeff was a quiet child fascinated by art and drawing. After a falling out with his parents, he struck out on his own, holding down an apartment with a job at a Brooklyn textile factory. When his mental health took a turn, he lost that job, and then his apartment. For the next decade, he lived on the streets, surviving through the kindness of strangers, soup kitchens, and time spent in and out of shelters.

He would, in his own words, “self-admit” at Kings County Hospital, spending a day in the ER, or two or three days with a mental health crisis. Without a fixed address, doctors would not prescribe him regular medication, and he was discharged without a treatment or housing plan. He flew under the radar, and his tendency toward one-word answers meant that he didn’t get the help he needed.

Then one day, he asked directions from someone on the streets in Crown Heights, who patiently stopped to talk with him. The person asked if he knew about Breaking Ground and recommended he see an outreach team. He made the first connection later that day.

While living on the street, Jeff had lost his ability to care for himself. The outreach teams helped him get connected with benefits and services, and found a placement for him at The Andrews, Breaking Ground’s Safe Haven transitional residence on the Bowery. For nearly a year, Jeff worked with his case manager on relearning self-care, medication management, and other activities of daily living. When he signed a lease at The Christopher, caring for his own apartment was disorienting at first, and he maintained some of the habits he’d developed living on the street.

But with caring, persistent help from the Breaking Ground team and onsite social services staff, Jeff began to open up. He started attending activities – his favorite is the cooking class where he learned to select and prepare in-season produce and made pizza from scratch for the first time. He’s made friends with his neighbors, with whom he participates in activities inside and outside the building. He loves going to the park to meditate, and to the rooftop garden to enjoy the green space, wildlife, and the sounds of the city. While he still suffers from depression, he’s fortunate to be able to see the psychiatrist at The Christopher regularly, and feels better now than any other time he can remember. And recently, he began to reconnect with family he has not seen in more than a decade.

Jeff demonstrates the restorative power of supportive housing – his experience of homelessness was not just about the lack of a place to live. With an apartment, and the support he needs to maintain housing for the long term, he’s thriving, and working toward an ever-brighter future.



Photo: Jeff Peronel

2019 Institutional Funders \$5k+



We gratefully acknowledge the following corporate and foundation donors who supported our mission in 2019 with a financial or in-kind gift of \$5,000 or greater:

ABS Partners Real Estate LLC
AKRF, Inc.
Albemarle Investment Corp.
Alchemy Acquisitions LLC
All New York Title Agency
Alliance Data
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Altman Foundation
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The Dammann Fund

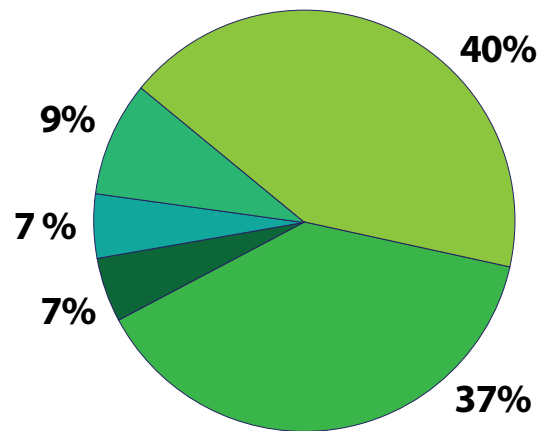
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Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
TF Cornerstone Inc.
Titlevest
Urban Edge Properties
Vornado Realty Trust
Wells Fargo
Winick Realty Group, LLC

2019 Financials REVENUES AND EXPENSES

REVENUES

Program Revenue	40%	
Rental Income	37%	
Dev & Mgmt Fees	9%	
Contributions	7%	
Other Income	7%	
Total Revenue	\$92.1M	



NOTE:

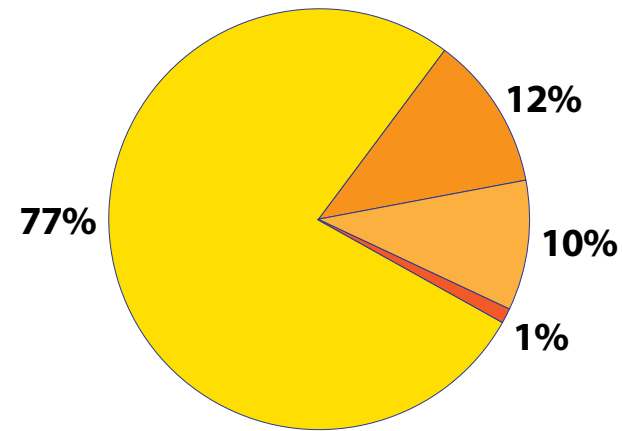
Total operating revenues have increased 26% over the last three years, driven primary by social service contracts with state, and city agencies. In addition to government contracts, Breaking Ground earns fees from permanent supportive housing that we develop and manage, as well as rental income from buildings that we own.

The diversity of revenue streams not only produces great results, but reduces exposure and overall risk.

EXPENSES

Program Services	77%	
Interest & Services Fees	12%	
General & Administrative	10%	
Fundraising	1%	

Total Expense \$91.7M

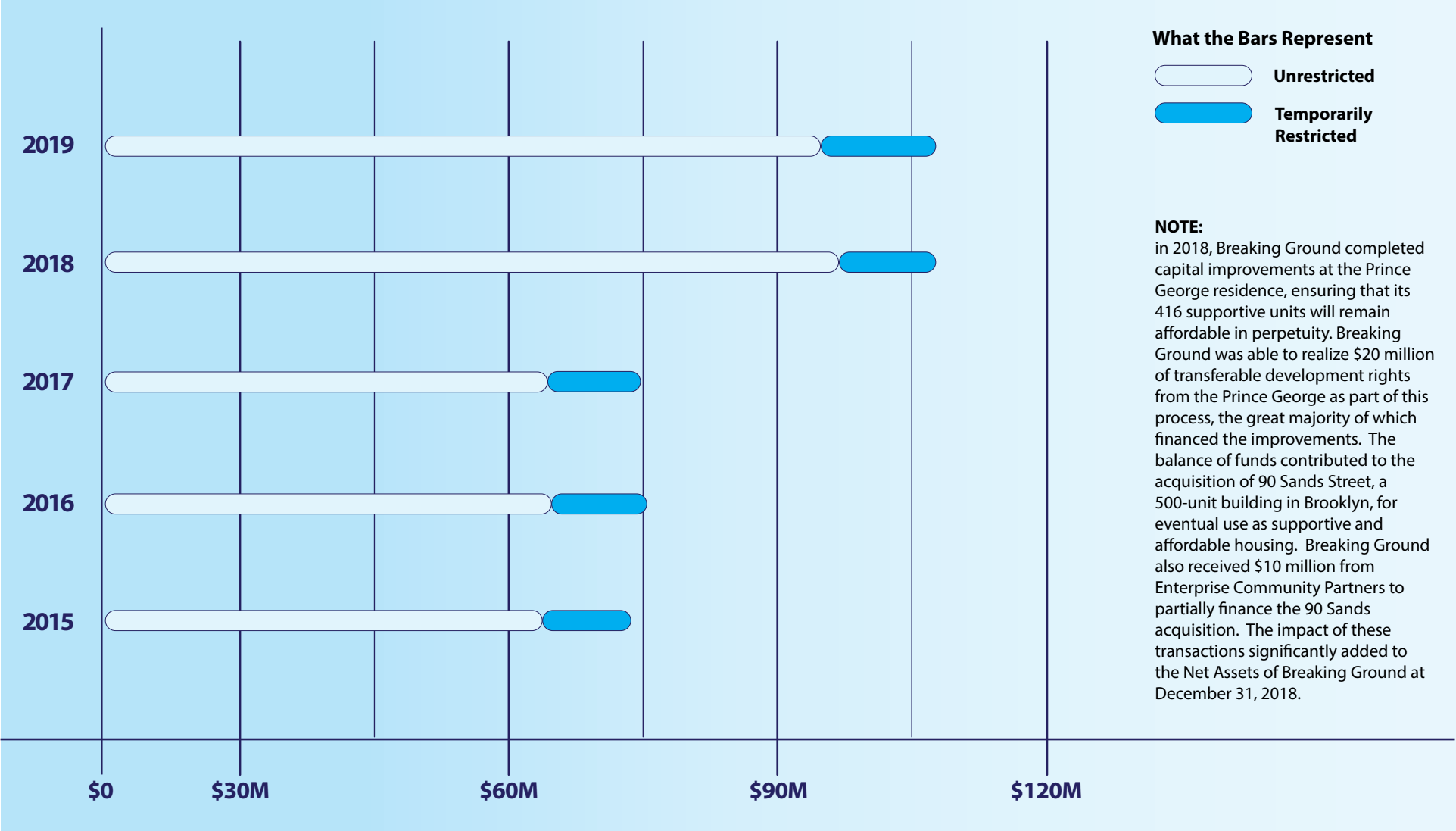


NOTE:

Breaking Ground's Program Efficiency (spending on primary mission vs. administrative costs) and Fundraising Efficiency Ratio (the cost to raise \$1) compare favorably to industry benchmarks.

Spending on program services has increased significantly over the past five years. These services include outreach to chronically homeless individuals, a drop-in center, and transitional and permanent housing resources for vulnerable New Yorkers.

NET ASSETS: 2015 - 2019



CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Revenues

Contributions	\$	6,666,700
Government Grants & Contracts	\$	37,091,437
Management Fees	\$	353,656
Developer Fees	\$	7,539,005
Rental Income	\$	34,197,863
Other Income	\$	6,234,737

Total Revenues **\$ 92,083,398**

Expenses

Social Services	\$	38,890,713
Housing Management & Development	\$	3,168,917
Affordable Housing Operations	\$	28,218,323
General & Administrative	\$	9,053,625
Fundraising	\$	973,162
Interest & Service Fees	\$	11,363,623

Total Expenses **\$ 91,668,363**

Excess Revenue Over Expenses* **\$ 415,035**

**excludes depreciation & amortization and non-recurring items*

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets	\$	889,209,699
Total Liabilities	\$	690,468,663

Net Assets

Controlling Interest	\$	107,780,433
Noncontrolling Interest	\$	90,960,603



Photos: Volunteers from our partners at the SpareRoom bring Holiday cheer to our senior tenants at The Domenech in Brooklyn.

Board and Senior Staff

(As of December 31, 2019)



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Toby Sherman
Vice President, Administration



After raising funds to cover the cost, Breaking Ground's Junior Board served Thanksgiving dinner to tenants at our Times Square residence in November 2019.



Even the Greatest Cities Need Great Supporters

Please Join Us and Donate:
BreakingGround.org

Photo: The view from the rooftop terrace of 90 Sands in Brooklyn; opening in 2021.