



**2024**

ANNUAL  
REPORT





## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles Burpee

Michael Lunt

Becki Bykerk

Alex Fernandez

Claire Groen

Patty Riva

Rossemay Salinas

LuAnn VanHaren

Ojone Amedaji

Jeff VanderLaan

## 2024 SENIOR STAFF

**Thelma Ensink**, Executive Director

**Stacey O'Keefe**, Development Director

**Lacey Conte**, Business Director

**Nelson Koon**, Community Engagement Director

**Drew Clay**, Operations Director

**Marissa Lee**, Shelter Director



### COVER:

Maria's story is featured on page 5.



## MISSION

To reflect the love of Christ to all who come through our doors by building relationships and offering programs that foster dignity and respect.



## VISION

For those we serve, we will be a community that overcomes obstacles, celebrates transformation, and realizes the full potential of all as children of God.



## VALUES

### FAITH

We trust in a God that created all, loves all, and invites all to participate in the restoration of the world.

### ADVOCACY

We represent those experiencing housing insecurity and poverty.

### COMMUNITY

We are a diverse group of people committed to loving each other and sharing life together.

### EMPOWERMENT

We equip people and restore hope so that everyone can reach their goals.

### SERVICE

We treat all with dignity and respect, setting ourselves aside for the sake of others.





## note from THELMA

**2024 HAS BEEN A YEAR OF INNOVATION, COURAGE, AND CHANGE FOR DÉGAGÉ.** We opened Heartside Landings on January 25 praying that 60% of its 25 residents, people who have been chronically homeless and are struggling with severe mental illness and substance use disorder, would continue to be housed a year later. The year ended with all 25 not only still housed, but with many of their lives completely transformed. Praise God!

During 2024, we also became a key partner in the 100 in 100 Campaign, a collaborative effort to house 100 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness within 100 days. While we did not complete the task in 100 days, we did indeed house 100 people, and perhaps more importantly, launched a new housing stabilization program, with case managers who visit people after they are housed to help sustain their housing. This program will be the key to stopping people from returning to the homelessness system. This is such an answer to prayer.

Sadly, we had to close our Community Center to the general public late in 2024 so that we could have sufficient space to serve the increasing number of women in our emergency shelter who need a space to stay warm during the winter and cool during the summer. To make sure community members still had somewhere to go, we launched a collaborative community center with Mel Trotter Ministries at LaGrave Church's The Vault. We thought we might see 80 - 100 people use that space, but it had a much bigger impact! We served 1,146 unique individuals

during the winter months, making sure they had a meal and a warm place to be, and also helping them get started on a housing plan.

2024 tested our faith and our willingness to take courageous steps into the unknown. We took those steps and God blessed us beyond our imagination. Since 1967, Dégagé has adapted to meet the needs of the community. Prior Dégagé Ministries' leaders have taken intrepid leaps of faith for nearly 60 years. And this past year, we let that faith inspire us to do the same. Our current Board, staff, volunteers, and donors were asked to say "Yes!" to a bold call. They did and God blessed it.

All of this was made possible thanks to you, our beloved community of donors, volunteers, and partners. Your prayers, financial support, and hands and feet made this happen. We go into 2025 knowing that, while we have changed some of the ways we do things, our commitment *to reflect the love of Christ to all who come through our doors by building relationships and offering programs that foster dignity and respect* is stronger than ever. Thank you for joining us in this important and transformational work.

In Christ,

Thelma Ensink  
Executive Director



*Maria's Story*

**“Every time I open my door and walk inside, I say thank you Jesus for this beautiful home. I never imagined I would be able to live in a place as beautiful as this, a place where no one else lived before me,” Maria explains with a big smile.**

She recently moved into her new apartment located in a brand new complex for seniors, after receiving a housing choice voucher as a part of the *100 in 100 program* run by Dégagé Ministries, Mel Trotter Ministries, and their partners.

Maria ended up in emergency shelter at Dégagé after the death of her children’s father. She tried to live with her children, moving from home to home and helping to babysit while living there. But she was not able to live with them long term. She recalls standing in front of Dégagé for the first time and thinking, “I cannot believe I am out here at my age. I have 6 children, 15 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. I have worked hard to raise them, mostly working in factories.” She raised up her bent hands. “That’s why my fingers look like this.”

“But no matter where I was, I always had faith. I knew God had a plan for me. But I did not know his plan was this good. I love this place.”

Now Maria admits that staying at Dégagé was hard at her age, but she is so grateful to all of the staff for their kindness. She is especially thankful for Kaitlin, Jessica, and Marissa not only helping her through the housing application process, but also helping her stay encouraged when she would feel down. She had to wait over a year for housing.

Maria loves making enchiladas in her crockpot at home. The secret to her recipe is the sauce “and LOTS of cheese,” she explained. She really appreciates visits from her stabilization case manager, Candace, who makes sure she has nutritious food in the house and that she is making it to her doctor’s appointments.

Next year, Maria turns 70 and her dream is to have a birthday celebration in the community room of the apartment complex with all of her children and grandchildren. Maria struggles with her health, but she wants to spend the rest of her life reminding others of this: “Keep the faith, God knows what we need.”

***“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9***



*Lipinski Family*

Don and Jeff Lipinski standing in the Merchandise Equipment Showroom

## **“Our giving is rooted in Jesus Christ. Supporting Dégagé is putting my faith into motion.”**

Anyone who walks into the Merchandise Equipment & Supply showroom might first notice the neon sign “Joe’s Bar & Grill” over the test kitchen. “The sign is a cheeky nod to our grandfather, Joseph Lipinski, who started our company in 1947,” shared Don Lipinski, the current co-owner of the business. Joseph’s grandsons, Jeff and Don, are the third generation to run the prominent Grand Rapids food service equipment and supply company.

The minute Jeff explained, “Don and I are first cousins, born 11 days apart,” Don was quick to add, “I’m older.” Then they both laughed. The camaraderie and warmth between the two men was obvious. “We’ve been best friends our entire lives, and that comes with a lot of trust and respect, which is a great way to run a business together,” Jeff said.

Looking for trust and respect is also important to the family when it comes to philanthropy. The Lipinski family and its members are generational partners with Dégagé, supporting the ministry for more than 24 years. When asked “Why Dégagé Ministries?” both men talked about the importance of relationship. “I’ve never felt like a checkbook to Dégagé. The communication

went both ways,” Jeff shared. Don echoed that sentiment, “I always knew that my donations were making a difference. For Merchandise Equipment, Dégagé feels like family. It’s a genuine partnership.”

The partnership between the Lipinski family and Dégagé Ministries also reflects their faith. “Our giving is rooted in Jesus Christ. Supporting Dégagé is putting my faith into motion,” Don said. “It’s also a tangible way to show my children how to give back, just like my parents showed me.” Jeff added, “We are passionate about supporting boots on the ground in our local community, and Dégagé is definitely ‘boots on the ground.’”

One word both men used when asked about their experiences with Dégagé, was ‘joy.’ “Seeing joy at Dégagé was surprising, given the situations that bring people there,” Don shared. “After my first tour of the shelter, I just couldn’t shake the feeling that this is God’s work. I needed to help. And I can draw a straight line from my monetary investment through to people getting keys to a new place to live.”

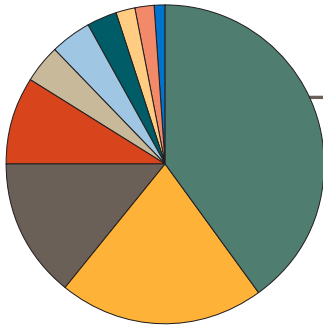
Jeff ended by sharing this: “God has integrated our lives into Dégagé’s world, and we are blessed by that.”



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO DONATE

# *The always busy Community Center*





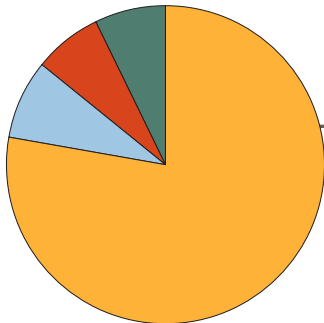
## INCOME: \$5,308,977

- Individuals: \$2,098,393 (40%)
- In-Kind: \$1,117,908 (21%)
- Government: \$738,250 (14%)
- Foundations: \$489,650 (9%)
- Churches: \$230,686 (4%)
- Sale of Property: \$200,000 (4%)
- Businesses: \$145,640 (3%)
- Other: \$116,654 (2%)
- Social Enterprise: \$98,287 (2%)
- Program Fees: \$73,509 (1%)

## SERVICE

## 2024 COUNT

Unique Women seeking shelter .....	759
Total women whose housing was resolved by end of year .....	649
Women directly assisted by Dégagé to attain housing .....	210
Percentage of women still housed at Heartside Landings (Complex Care).....	100%
Meals served .....	109,500
ID's obtained .....	649
Number of volunteers .....	1,142
Number of people who attended awareness & educational events .....	1,745



## EXPENSES: \$5,353,224

- Program: \$4,156,430 (78%)
- Development: \$427,953 (8%)
- Business Administration: \$388,621 (7%)
- Depreciation: \$380,220 (7%)

# Patron Birthdays



# 2024 PROGRAMS & SERVICES



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Dégagé Community Center & Dining Room:** Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were served in what has been called the Living Room of the Hearthside Neighborhood. Here, in addition to a warm meal, people found a sense of community, safety and inclusion.

**Wellness & Rest Center:** Our Wellness Center offered emergency services mostly to the unsheltered in our community. This included private showers, restrooms, lockers, and phones. The Rest Center provided a safe, clean, and dry place for the unhoused to recuperate from surgery or an illness with the recommendation of a medical professional.

**The Open Door Women's Shelter:** The Open Door provided a safe haven for women in crisis during the overnight hours. On any evening, 80-110 women stayed in the Center. Staff were available to help set goals, provided resources, and explored options for permanent housing.



## EMPOWERMENT SERVICES

**Close to Home:** This program provided semiprivate rooms at Dégagé for women close to moving into a place of their own.

**ID Program:** Michigan state IDs are required for employment, housing, opening a bank account, cashing a check, and more. Our staff helped people obtain the documents they need to get identification and walked them through the process from start to finish.

**Case Management:** Our Case Managers provided case management for the women staying in the Open Door. This included resources such as mental health care referrals and housing support.

**Workforce Development:** Dégagé's Workforce Development Program helped remove barriers to permanent employment, creating individualized plans that targeted the challenges each person faced and setting goals and step-by-step milestones to attain them.

**Open Door Bakery & Thrift on Div:** Dégagé's social enterprise businesses, employed people experiencing homelessness while raising funds for Dégagé.

**Heartside Landings:** A complex care transitional housing program for residents who have experienced chronic homelessness and who have not been successful in other supportive housing programs.

**Housing Stabilization Case Management:** This program offered case management to residents after moving into their new home. Case managers made home visits and helped residents get access to important resources so that they could meet their goals and maintain their housing.



## ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

**Volunteer:** Dégagé Ministries provided short and long term volunteer opportunities for community members in areas such as dining, patron activities, the Wellness and Rest Center, the Open Door Women's Shelter, the Open Door Bakery, and Thrift on Div.

**Educate:** Dégagé provided educational opportunities for churches, organizations, and community members that including housing simulations, restorative practices training, and training on the causes, realities, and solutions to homelessness.

**Advocate:** Dégagé equipped community members to advocate on behalf of people experiencing homelessness in Grand Rapids.



*Volunteers hosting Bingo*

## ORGANIZATIONS WHO VOLUNTEERED IN 2024



**VOLUNTEER AND PUT YOUR TIME & TALENTS TO WORK AT DÉGAGÉ**

# Those Honored & Remembered *in 2024*

## HONORED

### AMD

Kristina Dykstra

### Brian & Sandy Cornell

Nancy Castiglione  
Brian Cornell

### Caleb Harms

Jon Lanning  
Innogroup Foundation Inc

### Chris DeRuischer

Zak & Megan at Denali Title

### Chris Mason

Gilbert & Barbara Wynn

### Chuck & Mary Jo Burpee

Karen Henry Stokes  
Paul B Henry Foundation

### Carol Hoogewind

Laura Hoekstra

### Dennis and Abby Byle

Derek & Terilyn Byle

### Eileen Aparicio

Benjamin Aparicio

### Heather Lunt's Birthday

Margie Styf

### Helen Rossano

Ms. Rapp  
Andrew Rossano

### Heidi & Dan Hutchins

Kristen Hutchins  
Kelly Rupp

### Jeff VanderLaan

Roger & Jacquelyn VanderLaan

### Jordan Tuinstra

Craig Tuinstra

### Jen Byrne & Family, Bahar Negaran, Spencer & Hannah High

Twink Frey

### John & Laurie Horaney

Michael & Leslie Horaney

### Kimberly LeBeau Caplea

Susan DeVries

### Kevin Compagner

Stacey Helder

### LeRoy & Cindy Hubbert

Jennifer Saxton

### Liane & David Clark

Karin Maag

### Marti & Chip King

Jane Tol

### Michael & Heather Lunt

Edward & Kathleen Lunt

### Mike Van Haren

Van Haren Electric Inc.

### Our Brother Jim

Vern & Shelley Blocher

### Our Family Members

Klaus & Goldie Knoll

### Sarah Hanson

James Wright

### Tim & Sue Koetje

Annetta Koetje

### Tina Watson

Catherine Sinning

### Twink Frey

Deborah Ax

### Urs & Tannis Maag

Karin Maag

## Veterans

David Pacion

## REMEMBERED

### Alan Exoo

Linda Bieze  
Rebekah Burton & Family

### Alan Hartley

Hartley Family

### Bill Postmus

Joy Postmus  
Lyle & Barbara Voskuil  
Nancy Naber  
Dale & Norma Schuitema  
Ruth Majerle

### Bob Herrington

Sandra Herrington

### Corinne Ghastin

Koppin Family  
Long Family  
Kelly Family  
C.J. Boyd  
Eric & Cassandra  
Bob & Allison Basanes  
Bob & Lisa (Baker) Wiencek

### Charlie Royce

Angie Royce

### Chip Nelson

Donald & Cheryl Bushman

### Dave Zylstra

Stacey Helder  
Bredeweg & Zylstra Team

### Dorothy Bradfield

Ed & Jennifer Parks

### Devi Fongers

Anna Daining

### Ellen (Hulst) Meyer

Kenneth & Sandra VanDyke

### Frances Bouma

Ralph Bouma

### Gail Paulus

Steve Paulus

### Gloria Nelson

Donald & Cheryl Bushman

### Good Time at the Dégagé Coffee House

David Meyer

### Hannah DeHaan

Jean DeHaan

### Harold Mast

Patricia & John Callahan  
Stanley & Basilia Kruis  
Kryn & Betty Klompier  
Angie Mast  
Jim Orange  
Mary Hoogwerf & Craig Bosma  
Jean & Nicholas Vanderkwaak  
Prof. Myron & Willa Mast  
Cal Mulder

### Hazel Bushman

Donald & Cheryl Bushman

### Heidi Verstraete

Thomas & Joan Verstraete

### Ian Olsen

Marcia Olsen

### Jean Van Huffel

Farmers Trust  
The I.J. Van Huffel Foundation

### Joe Walker

Irene Walker

### John Alkema

Steven & Ellen Alkema

### John Bachert

CJ Coombes

**Joyce & Forrest Winchester**

Pam Winchester

**Joyce Bergman**

Brian Westra

**Justin VanHaven**

Audrey Craft

**Karen Stevenson**

Carole Sutphen

**Ken Dabney**

Rose & Tom Ervine

**Larry Lewis**

Katherine Lewis

**Laurissa Zimmer**

Anne Savage

**Lois Johnson**

Greg & Loryn Loughheed

**Marnie Kotwick**

John Kotwick

**Nancy Hatton**

Kathryn Chaplow

**Nancy Ruch**

Joshua Ruch

**Nelson Kingsley**

Thomas & Susan Kingsley

**Patrick Sawinski**

Robert & Debra Talalay

**Paul W.**

Karen & Ken Byran

**Rob Hecksel**

James Hecksel

Kimberly Skeltis

**Robert Gustavson**

Carol Gustavson

**Russ Reid**

Garth & Debra Jenkins

**Sandra Cornell**

Dennis & Susan Potter

Thomas Weaver

Paul & Jane Schut

Robert Beahan

Ulla Kerkstra

Marge Palmerlee

Nancy Castiglione

**Thomas P. Lammers**

Janice LaVigne

**Tim & Maureen Sullivan**

Joe & Tricia Schetz

**Virginia & Joseph Pacion**

David Pacion

**Yvonne Conroy**

Carole Sutphen

**Zach Kirk**

Beth Kelly



**You can honor or remember  
someone with your donation  
by scanning the QR code**

Dégagé   
MINISTRIES



# THE ULTIMATE GIFT

**Giving to Dégagé  
Ministries in Your Will**

**If you're interested in making an impact beyond your  
lifetime, please email [Stacey@degageministries.org](mailto:Stacey@degageministries.org)  
to learn more.**

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

JEREMIAH 29:11 (*The Dégagé 2024 verse of the year*)



A few of the Heartside Landing residents proudly displaying their certificate for being housed for a year.



139 Sheldon Ave. S · Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
degageministries.org · 616.454.1661

DONATE



HELP SUPPORT THIS  
IMPORTANT WORK

VOLUNTEER



PUT YOUR TIME & TALENTS  
TO WORK AT DÉGAGÉ

ADVOCATE



LEARN MORE ABOUT  
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES