

**BENZIE**

**SENIOR RESOURCES**

Be connected. Be supported. Be home.

*Providing exceptional services, resources and  
trusted care to support Benzie seniors.*

# **Annual Report 2023**

## A Message from Our Board President

Fiscal year 2023 was another year of growth and record numbers for Benzie Senior Resources.

A record 91,177 meals were served through both the Home Delivered Meals program and in person at The Gathering Place. Benzie Bus Senior Rides were up 36%, with a total of nearly 23,000 rides provided. More seniors than ever received relief from the grant-funded Essential Needs Program - a safety net that provides for things like emergency home repairs, essential furnace fuel and assistance with power bills, to prevent shut-offs.

Activities at The Gathering Place were up 41% this past year. In-Home Care visits increased by 10% with a record number of clients served, and more people than ever were provided with Foot Care Clinic appointments, and professional consultations for Estate Planning. The trend is clear. The need for Benzie Senior Resources services continues to grow.

The cost of providing essential services continues to climb. In the past 3 years, fleet fuel & vehicle maintenance, and food expenses have increased 140% and 57% respectively. Many other services experienced similar cost increases. At the same time, the threat of reduced federal funding looms.

Though we very much appreciate the state and federal funding, local millage and grants essential to our operation, each year we must raise thousands of dollars to meet service expenses. We are *beyond grateful* to the individuals, businesses and organizations who provide the financial donations, sponsorships, and volunteer hours needed to keep this pace. Without this support, we simply could not operate.

Benzie Senior Resources continually evaluates programs to provide critical services in the most efficient ways. This past year, an ad hoc Board committee visited multiple Michigan senior centers to observe, compare, and identify best practices that could be applied to our operations.

As responsible stewards of the precious resources that sustain our operations, we monitor and prioritize services. This year, we made the very difficult decision to discontinue the sliding scale Lawn Chore program. As the demand for life sustaining services like Home Delivered Meals and In-Home Health Care grow, we must prioritize the most critical services.

Each month, we receive about 1000 service inquiries from seniors and the family members who care for them. We work to accommodate each one as we are able. We know our services and connections to other area resources are what will allow our Benzie County seniors to continue living in their own homes with dignity and independence.

Looking to the future, we have embarked on a formalized discovery process which will include and engage multiple segments of our community. The process will assist us in evaluating our current range of services and help us to envision and plan for the future. Our seniors are the fastest growing segment of Benzie County's population, and we must actively plan to keep pace with their needs.

With gratitude.

*Nancy Mullen Call*

Board President

***Celebrating our Beautiful Seniors!***

***"The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes." ~ Frank Lloyd Wright***

## **A Message from Our Executive Director – Douglas Durand**

### **“A Year of Records”**

As I look back at the accomplishments from Benzie Senior Resources' Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Annual Report, I am amazed at the number of adults over 60 we served with our extensive suite of twenty-six programs. We touched the lives of 2,065 seniors in Benzie County!

We once again hit new highs in the total number of meals served both with our Home Delivered Meals or commonly known as Meals on Wheels, and the folks coming into The Gathering Place to share lunch together in person.

Other significant new highs were the number of clients who were provided in-home help such as personal care, respite care and medication management. We added another foot care clinic to help meet that demand. The snow removal service hit a milestone with 167 clients. We saw a record amount of ridership for senior transportation through our partnership with Benzie Bus at no cost for those 60 and older in Benzie County.

While this sounds like a celebration and it truly is, all this work comes with the challenges of rising costs, increased demand, and shrinking funds. In fact, the last two fiscal years have seen us dipping into reserved funds to meet growing expenses. A look at future shows no slowing of this trend as our 60+ population continues to grow.

As our county's population continues to age, we are working to prepare for the additional services needed to help our seniors stay active, nourished, cared for and living independently in their own homes.

We are already at capacity in many areas with our current staff and facilities, which does place a strain on resources. For the first time, we are experiencing some wait lists within our programs, and are doing what we can to eliminate them as quickly as possible.

To continue meeting this tremendous need, the Board of Directors and management staff are engaging in our five-year strategic plan with the following three goals: 1) Broaden and deepen our mission-aligned services, 2) Enhance communications, marketing, and engagement capabilities, and 3) Strengthen and deepen our physical, financial, and operational capacity.

Your support and help are invaluable to this agency as we work to keep pace with our seniors' needs. I sincerely thank you. I'm always interested in hearing your thoughts as we make future plans. Please reach out at any time to share thoughts on this report, or for our agency in general. You can email me at [durandd@benzieseniorresources.org](mailto:durandd@benzieseniorresources.org) or stop in and see me!

# Highlights of 2023

## Implementing the Strategic Plan

Began the work of the Board-approved 5-Year Strategic Plan. The Strategic Focus Areas are:

- Broaden and deepen our mission-aligned services: Finding ways to keep pace with the growing need for life-sustaining services despite sharp expense increases.
- Enhance our communications, marketing, and engagement capabilities: Development and Communications Director hired, service flyers provided door-to-door, and increased social media presence for The Gathering Place, website updates initiated.
- Strengthen and deepen our physical, financial, and operational capacity: Community Discovery Process began in November, to determine future service and facility needs.

## The Gathering Place Advisory Council Committee

The purpose of The Gathering Place Senior Center Advisory Council is to advise the Senior Center Coordinator, Executive Chef and Benzie Senior Resources' Executive Director on senior related issues based on input received to improve the programs, policies, and services provided to the seniors of Benzie County. 2023 Committee Highlights:

- Approved and submitted to the BSR Board a policy for fundraising events done on behalf of The Gathering Place.
- Hosted a successful Yard Sale event, netting over \$2,100
- Voted to resurrect the Soup Bowl Fundraiser done in past years, Planned for March of 2024.



## Holiday Christmas Bag Program

Eleven churches collected items for over 250 gift bags. Additionally, West Shore Bank (Frankfort) made the Christmas Bag program the focus of their 2023 Spirit of Giving initiative, collecting over 1,000 items and donating nearly \$2,000 in funds (including a \$1,000 match by West Shore Bank). In addition to the individual donations of items and funding, Spartan Nash helped the program by making us the recipient of the Benzonia Family Fare store's Secret Santa for Seniors initiative. The bags were assembled by dedicated group of volunteers at The Gathering Place.

## Produce Bingo Takes Off!

Knowing the health-sustaining benefits of adding fresh produce to the diet, The Gathering Place Director Susan Glass worked in 2023 to grow the monthly Produce Bingo night at The Gathering Place. During each Produce Bingo evening, a light meal is served before bingo commences. Winners select fresh produce from the colorful array displayed on table at the front of the room. Play is designed so that each participant leaves with a large bag of produce. Produce Bingo participation has grown from the initial 18 players to the record high of nearly 90 (capacity for The Gathering Place room). With rising food costs, we'd especially like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals, churches, and the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation Cambell Fund, for sponsoring this fun, healthy activity!



### HealthRides

We continued to partner with Benzie Bus to continue HealthRides. This program addresses the critical need of vulnerable Benzie County Seniors having transportation access to their medical appointments in Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Manistee and Wexford Counties. It also avoids longer waiting periods before and after appointments, which sometimes occurs with regular transportation service.

The overall goal is to break down the barriers to wellness in our senior community. Thus:

- Decreasing missed appointments
- Increasing pharmacy and medication access
- Decreasing wait times to and from appointments
- Decreasing safety concerns
- Decreasing isolation
- Increasing socialization
- Improving healthcare access leading to a better chance for improved health.

If the number of rides are any indication, we've met the goal rather handily. **During 2023, this partnership provided 426 non-emergency Healthrides to Benzie County Seniors!**



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For Appointments in:  
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**FARES**  
\$15 One-way\*  
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\*Companion Ride FREE  
Financial assistance is available for clients of Benzie Senior Resources. Call 231-525-0600 to see if you qualify.

**HOW TO RIDE**  
Call 231-325-3000, Ext. 1 to schedule your ride. Be ready at the beginning of the time window you are given. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride!

\*Negotiation on fare developed will be provided to the rider based on fare. Benzie Senior Resources is not responsible for any fare changes.

**B BenzieBus.com**

### A New Delivery Van!



With the hills, sometimes rough terrain and winter Benzie County driving, our Home-Delivered Meals delivery fleet takes a beating. We were beyond tickled to add a brand new all-wheel-drive van and lots of cargo space this year. This delivery vehicle is ours, thanks to gifts from The Benzie County Community Chest, The Oleson Foundation, Cherryland Electric Cooperative Cherryland Cares Foundation, and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. Nearly 400 home-bound Benzie seniors share in our gratitude!

### Meal Delivery by Betsy Coffia

We are honored that Michigan State Representative (103<sup>rd</sup> District) Betsy Coffia visited this summer to learn more about the effect of food insecurity on senior citizens. She visited the kitchen to learn about our process for meal preparation, and then rode along on a route for delivery. We appreciate her voice as an advocate for Benzie County seniors!





### Walk-A-Thon



The walk-A-Thon Fundraiser was held on August 5<sup>th</sup>, and the weather was perfect with a nice breeze blowing off Crystal Lake. It was great year, with 46 walkers and a lot of new business sponsors. Rev. Dinah Haag threw down a challenge to area churches to sponsor the event, and they rose to the challenge by giving over \$3,000. We had many compliments on the delicious brunch including hot dishes and baked goods. In all, just over \$40,000 was raised to help fund Home Delivered Meals and In-Home Healthcare Services. The event committee, volunteers and staff were so energized by this year's turnout, they began planning for 2024 less than a month later!

### National Senior Center Month

In September, we continued the tradition of celebrating National Senior Center Month. The Gathering Place is the spot for Benzie County senior to share a delicious meal, sing, dance, exercise, try their hand at new art or craft activities, discuss books, create and sell craft items, celebrate holidays and much more. Our thanks to the many area businesses and individuals who donated items that allowed everyone to win something over the course of the month. We were able to offer gift cards, home décor, gardening items, French-milled soaps, ice cream, pizza, BBQ and more. Studies consistently point to isolation and loneliness as factors impacting senior citizens. In fact, over 50% of those over age 60 share they struggle with isolation. We're grateful to our community for recognizing the value of seniors having a place to be together! See below for a fun collection of photos taken at The Gathering Place in 2023!

### The Discovery Process Begins!

In watching population trends and rising costs, Benzie Senior Resources' leadership determined that there is no time like the present to take stock of our community's needs and the agency's ability to meet those. In 2023, they hired Integrated Architecture of Grand Rapids, to conduct a Discovery Process of community demographics and needs, and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of Benzie Senior Resources as an agency. Rather than make assumptions about community needs and the organizations already working to meet those, the Discovery Process is designed to unsurfaced the actual needs to be addressed, and Benzie Senior Resource's ability to meet those given its current facility. The Discovery Process will determine the next steps needed to safeguard sustainability, and best provide the services identified as actually needed. The Discovery Process began in November.



The Gathering Place  
\*8,245 Activity Attendance  
\*21 Core Activities  
\*14 Special Events Held

## The Gathering Place Senior Center Photos 2023!



# Changing Lives!

## 2023 Services Summary

### General Program Data:

**2,065** Unduplicated clients served  
**376** Out of County clients served  
**636** Veterans and Spouses of Veterans Served  
**807** are low income (<180% poverty)  
**984** Male  
**1,457** Female

#### Age

60-69 – **635** Clients  
70-79 – **952** Clients  
80-89 – **610** Clients  
90 and over – **244** Clients

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### Meals & Food Services by The Numbers

- **72,349** meals delivered to **361** homebound clients
- **73,965** miles driven to deliver meals
- **2,006** Shelf-Stable food boxes, Fresh Produce Bags, BACN Bags and Commodities delivered
- **79** Volunteers provided **7,890** hours
- Served **18,828** Congregate and Curbside Meals to **1,015** people at The Gathering Place Senior Center--**RECORD**
- **175** individuals received Project Senior Fresh \$25 Coupons with a value of \$4,500
- **91,177** total meals prepared – **RECORD**

### Home Services by The Numbers

- **4,897** Personal Care Visits
- **368** Respite Care Visits
- **1,437** RN visits for assessments, medication management & in-home foot care – **2<sup>nd</sup> HIGHEST RECORDED**
- **11,987** hours provided to **141** in-home service Clients—**RECORD NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED**
- **3,708** homemaking services hours to **112** clients
- **1,397** snowplows to **167** clients—**RECORD CLIENTS**
- **1,140** lawn mows to **129** clients—**RECORD CLIENTS**

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### Health & Safety Services by The Numbers

- **682** appointments were made for the footcare clinic – **RECORD**
- **43** clients utilized the Guardian Medical Monitoring System for emergency needs at no cost to them
- **8** individuals received free dental services through the Senior Oral Healthcare Program

### Support Services by The Numbers

- **284** individuals were provided **16,754** free Benzie Bus rides – **RECORD**
- **426** non-emergency medical Healthrides provided – **HIGHEST NUMBER TO DATE**
- **230** individuals received Income Tax Preparation Assistance at no cost to them
- **119** individuals were guided through the Medicare/Medicaid maze with assistance in Part D Prescription coverage, choosing the right Medicare Supplemental Insurance, annual paperwork and documentation for Medicaid for a savings of over **\$68,381**
- **41** individuals received financial assistance through the Senior Essential Needs Fund Program--**RECORD**
- **70** individuals obtained free Estate Planning advice through the partnership with Swogger, Bruce & Miller Law Firm – **RECORD**
- \*BSR Information & Referral professionals answered **11,590** inquiries leading to service referral
- \***16** individuals attended the Hearing Clinic, which was restarted after 3 years



# TOWNSHIP REPORT – CLIENTS SERVED

# of Services	Almira	Benzonia	Blaine	Colfax	Crystal Lake	Gilmore	Homestead	Inland
1 Service	97	174	33	25	58	40	121	102
2-3 Services	55	179	12	18	56	27	116	83
4-6 Services	33	57	10	3	23	14	64	16
7+ Services	9	17	1	2	3	5	26	12
Total Clients	194	427	56	48	140	86	327	213

# of Services	Joyfield	Lake	Platte	Weldon	City of Frankfort	Grand Total	Percentage
1 Service	55	64	37	37	89	932	45%
2-3 Services	31	48	31	23	69	748	36%
4-6 Services	12	12	6	7	28	285	14%
7+ Services	5	5	3	1	11	100	5%
Total Clients	103	129	77	68	197	2065	100%

## TOP TEN PROGRAMS & SERVICES FOR 2023:

1. Congregate Meals & The Gathering Place Activities
2. Home Delivered Meals
3. Income Tax Assistance
4. Medicare/Medicaid Assistance
5. Produce Bags
6. Foot Clinic
7. In-Home Services
8. Snow Removal
9. Homemaker
10. Transportation/Health Rides

### Volunteer Giving

\*124 Agency Volunteers

\*11,203 Service Hours

It is only through the dedicated service of our volunteers that we can meet the needs of so many Benzie County seniors. We simply cannot adequately express our thanks. Did you know that:

- Every day, **10 or more** volunteers are needed to help deliver over 200 meals?
- It takes **8 or more** Gathering Place volunteers to keep those doors open each day?
- Each Tuesday, **15 or more** volunteer musicians entertain for several hours?
- **Volunteers** are one of the most needed, treasured and enduring foundations of Benzie Senior Resources' work? Help us spread the word!



"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, they just have the heart"  
~Elizabeth Andrew

# Walk-A-Thon

BENZIE SENIOR RESOURCES THANKS ALL PARTICIPANTS, INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS,  
AND THE FOLLOWING EVENT SPONSORS FOR MAKING  
THE 2023 WALK-A-THON A SUCCESS!



**BENZIE SENIOR RESOURCES**  
By commitment, by support, by love

**WALK-A-THON**

THANK YOU to our  
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# TESTAMONIALS

The quotes on this page are actual comments from people helped by Benzie Senior Resources in 2023, and thoughts from our valued staff who give compassionate care through aligning their work days with our mission!

"When my daughter steered me toward Benzie Senior Resources, it was the best possible move for me. I've been with them now for quite some time, and am very happy." ~Multi-service client

"I like being involved in every aspect of the meals—from the planning, to creating recipes, cooking and serving. It's rewarding to understand how proud I can be of our team because I know all the steps it takes to present each meal."  
~ The Gathering Place Chef David Main

Every day I can hit the door knowing I've made a difference in the lives of our seniors. I'm proud of my daily work here at Benzie Senior Resources."  
~Administrative Assistant  
Angela Haase

"My homemaker is a gem and seems to read my mind as what needs to be done in my house."  
~Homemaker client

"I receive Meals on Wheels, and the great care I receive by being treated with such love and respect. You are just always there for me."  
~Home delivered meals client

"I love nothing more than to hear a client talk about the difference Benzie Senior Resources has made in their lives. I especially like it when they name the specific staff or volunteer who made that difference."  
~ Executive Director Douglas Durand

"The ease of working with your agency, quality of staff, especially my home healthcare aide, and the affordability are hard to beat. The meal program is also very good!"  
~Home healthcare client

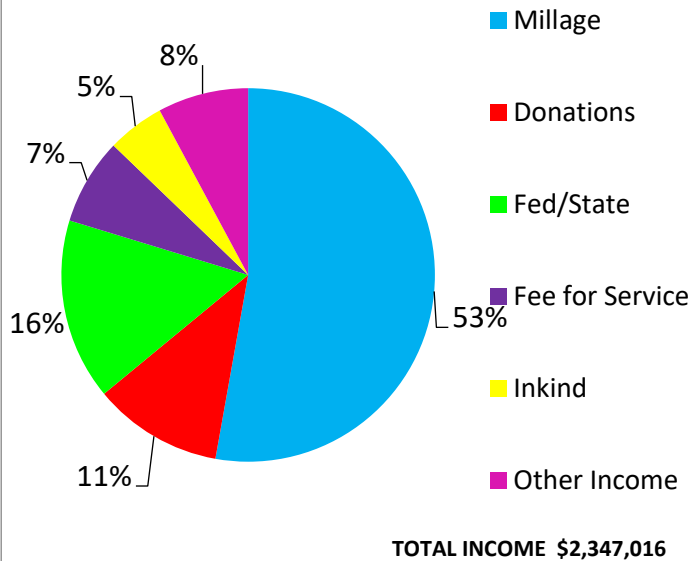
"My spouse and I both had surgery and could not cook afterwards. We thank Benzie Senior Resources for taking care of us!"  
~Home delivered meals client

"I love offering programs and activities that give our congregants a purpose to get out of their home, so people can socialize and look forward to their day. It's very important to me to have a full calendar of events for them to choose from."  
~The Gathering Place  
Director Susan Glass.

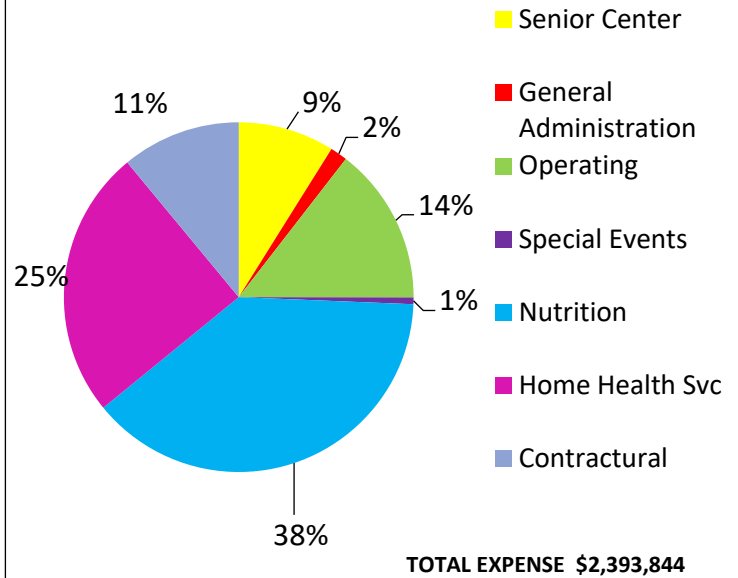


# 2023 Financial Snapshot

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



We deeply appreciate the financial support received from Benzie County, numerous public and private family foundations, local businesses and the dedicated individuals who partner with us in service to Benzie County Seniors.

Gratefully,

The 2023 Benzie Senior Resources Board of Directors:

Nancy Mullen Call | President

Paul Turner | Vice President

Victor Dinsmoore | Treasurer

Leo Hughes | Secretary

Reverend Dinah Haag

Pamela Howe-Perry

Deb Rogers

Linda Ringleka

Rosemary Russell

Ingrid Turner

Douglas Durand | Executive Director

Benzie Senior Resources is a private, non-profit organization that provides programs and services for residents of Benzie County, Michigan who are age 60 and older.

**Our Mission:**

**To provide exceptional services, resources and trusted care to support Benzie County Seniors**

10542 Main Street, Honor, MI 49640

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