

BENZIE

SENIOR RESOURCES

Be connected. Be supported. Be home.

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

Annual Report

2024

A Message from Our Board President

Seems every year is a new adventure and this year has been no different. Growth of the senior population in Benzie County keeps outpacing all other age groups, and as a result, the demand for senior services continues to expand. As you'll see in this Annual Report, the participation numbers for many of our programs are up yet again.

Back in 2016, the Benzie Council on Aging merged with Benzie Home Health Care in order to consolidate senior services within the county. At that time, the Council on Aging Executive Director, Doug Durand, took over the new organization. Under his leadership, Benzie Senior Resources has grown and flourished. He was the right leader at the right time, and we have been so fortunate to have him at the helm for nearly a decade.

The time has come for Doug to retire, and he will be sorely missed. He is well regarded for his passion, commitment, and leadership - not only here in Benzie County, but by his colleagues and associates throughout the state. We've been told multiple times that Doug sets the standard for senior organization leadership in the state of Michigan. Big shoes to fill...

The Board of Directors for Benzie Senior Resources is in the midst of a search for a new Executive Director. Though a very high bar has been set, we are confident we will find the right person to lead the organization and move it forward in the months and years ahead.

Also this past year, we embarked on a public Discovery Process, working with Integrated Architecture, a well regarded firm from the Grand Rapids area. Though their name would suggest that we were looking at building something, that wasn't the focus of the project. With program numbers continuously growing and the severe limitations that our current facilities place on our ability to respond, we wanted to reach out to the people of Benzie County and engage their help in envisioning the future of Benzie Senior Resources. Specifically, we looked at trends that are bearing on our organization. And we asked our current and future constituents what senior services they expected and felt were critical going forward.

The outcome of this process was a document that addresses these issues and identifies a path forward. It is our hope and expectation that our new Executive Director will assist the Board and the community at large in positioning our organization and our facilities to serve the citizens of Benzie County both now and in the years ahead. But first, we'll give our new Director some time to settle in and become familiar and comfortable with the Benzie Senior Resources organization, the array of programs it offers, the hardworking staff members that deliver our services, and the many volunteers and community partners that support all that we do.

It's been a year of change, growth, and learning. We are sorry that Doug is leaving us, but excited for him and his family to be embarking on the next chapter of their lives. We have a strong, solid organization. We have the gratitude of our seniors, and the strong support of our county leadership and citizenry.

Onward and upward.

Nancy Mullen Call

Board President

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." ~ Abraham Lincoln

A Message from Our Executive Director

“This has been the honor of my life.”

I admit to having many mixed emotions as I write because this will be the last time I write thoughts about wrapping up a year for the Annual Report. This time I'm not just writing about wrapping up a year, but also my time here at Benzie Senior Resources. As many already know, I will be entering a new life chapter upon my December 31st retirement.

It is hard to believe that the desire to focus on support and care for our greatest generation led to a work life of over 40 years. Each of those years brought new lessons, changes and opportunity for growth—both my own and the agency's. It's been more rewarding than I could have ever imagined.

One of the largest changes came about through letting those lessons guide me in spearheading the 2016 merger when we officially became Benzie Senior Resources. By bringing together what was formerly Benzie County Council on Aging and Benzie Home Healthcare, the “NEW” agency grew operations by substantially increasing programs and services. To date, Benzie Senior Resources has helped countless seniors continue to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Over the past 11 years, we have continued to implement new programs based on our senior needs assessments surveys and community outreach discussions. In other words, we listen to you! Our outreach is designed around your critical needs in nutrition, home healthcare, advocacy, and socialization activities at The Gathering Place. Through it all, my goal has always been to find ways to enhance individual well-being and bring peace of mind to each of our seniors and their families.

My time here has been shared with an excellent staff, group of volunteers and independent contractors. Together we worked through the challenges of the merger, and together we weathered the Covid-19 pandemic. During a time of great stress, uncertainty and sadness in the senior population, I'm proud to say that the way Benzie Senior Resources stepped up and continued to serve was second to none.

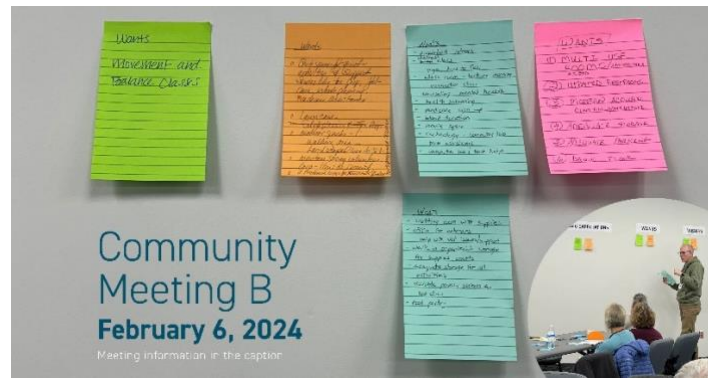
As director, I've also been blessed by the support of Benzie County, our past and current Board of Directors, countless individual donors, foundations and local businesses who put their trust and faith in our work. Their financial support has allowed us to keep eyes fixed firmly our mission while continuing to meet the needs of an ever-growing senior population.

Speaking of that ever-growing senior population: As with the past several years, that growth was the top story of 2024. Did you know that over the past 10 years, Benzie County's population has grown by 2%, but the *senior* population has grown by 30%? This fact had an impact on everything we did in 2024, and the way we are working to plan for the years ahead.

In closing, you all have been instrumental in my life journey and growth as a person. I have shared many laughs with you along the way, and also many times of sadness and tears. I will forever hold all of this close to my heart.

With Gratitude,
Doug Durand
Executive Director

Highlights of 2024



THE DISCOVERY PROCESS

Working with Integrated Architecture of Grand Rapids, we undertook a 4-months-long process during which we:

- Studied population trends for each age bracket served by Benzie Senior Resources
- Sought community input in a series of three public meetings, regarding the actual needs of Benzie County seniors, and our ability as an agency to meet those
- Studied societal trends that affect the aging population, such as access to healthcare, nutrition, the rising age of retirement, financial stress, the growing number of seniors having no family in their immediate living vicinity, transportation and social isolation
- Talked with partner agencies to learn what the future holds in terms of our joint work
- Listened to the seniors currently participating in activities at The Gathering Place, to better prioritize issues most important to them
- Surveyed financial stakeholders and volunteers to better understand their passion for our work, and how they wish to remain involved

Although we know the current dual-location facilities of BSR presents challenges, we did not set out on the Discovery Process with any assumptions regarding what we might need. What do we need to do to assure the sustainability of BSR for Benzie seniors? How are our current facilities hindering that work? Should we plan to remodel? Or do we need to relocate and build new? The information gleaned did provide answers to some of these questions, and we look forward to sharing those outcomes with the community later in 2025.

NEW ELECTRIC MEAL TRANSPORTERS

Electric meal transporters are a critical component to the Home Delivered Meals Program, as they allow the food to be delivered at the needed safe temperature. After several years of repeated disinfecting, our existing transporters were beginning to experience breaking door hinges and were becoming unable to keep the food safely warm. Transporters are expensive—over \$1,400 apiece. We are grateful to the Oleson Foundation for providing us with a grant that allowed us to purchase a dozen new transporters!





SOUP'S ON!

The Gathering Place Advisory Council voted to bring back the annual Soup Supper, which had been paused during the years of Covid. In March, the well-attended event was embraced by a grateful community happy to come out and enjoy soups from 13 area restaurants (and our own Gathering Place kitchen) ladled out by affable area Celebrity Soup Servers. Watch for this event to return to its original October timeline in the years to come.

OUR SENIOR ARTISTS CREATE

A call for art led to several watercolor submissions from The Gathering Place participants. Ten winning submissions were used to print collections of note cards (either a 5-pack or 10-pack). The scenes include many area flora and fauna, the Frankfort Breakwater Light and Point Betsie Lighthouse. Card packs were sold at the Interlochen Farmer's Market, and are still available at The Gathering Place. Proceeds of the cards help fund The Gathering Place activities and workshops.



BLUEBERRY DASH 5K FUN RUN

Those in Benzie County during August could likely not have escaped the marketing for our re-imagined Walk-A-Thon. We were pleased with the results of the first-ever Blueberry Dash 5K Fun Run. 110 people, including some who participated virtually from other locations, took part. People were able to walk, run or ride bikes, and afterward were served a delicious blueberry-themed brunch in Bellows Park. Participants included both residents and those visiting the area. The night of the 5K, the community was invited to enjoy an evening of music and celebration with local Zydeco band K. Jones and the Benzie Playboys. All participants were gracious in their desire to assist Benzie seniors.



Thank You to our 2024 Blueberry Dash Sponsors



GOLD MEDAL SPONSORS



Baymont Inn
Blaine Christian Church
Cherryland Electric Cooperative
Comfort Keepers
Mountain View Mini Mart/Papano's Pizza
State Savings Bank
The Roadhouse Mexican Bar & Grill



SILVER MEDAL SPONSORS



Edward Jones-Justin Keillor
Labadie's Summer Place Casuals
Munson Medical Center- Paul Oliver Hospital
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
The Jon Zickert Group at Real Estate One



BRONZE MEDAL SPONSORS



AJ's Excavating LLC	Iron Fish Distillery
Anderson, Tackman & Co., PLC	Kilwins Frankfort
Eden Hill Vines	Lisa Musgrave, DDS
First Congregational Church Frankfort	Rock's Landing
Frankfort Pines	St. Ann of Frankfort
Friends of the Garden Theater	Stefanski Dental
Graceland Fruit, Inc.	The Cherry Hut Restaurant
Honor Bank	Webber Insurance Agency
Honor & Onekama Building Supply	

Services Summary

General Program Data:

1,906 Unduplicated clients served
224 Out of County clients served
591 Veterans and Spouses of Veterans Served
758 are low income (<180% poverty)
775 Male
1,131 Female

Age

60-69 – **496** Clients
70-79 – **761** Clients
80-89 – **477** Clients
90 and over – **172** Clients

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Meals & Food Services by The Numbers

- **71,321** meals delivered to **296** homebound clients
- **71,255** miles driven to deliver meals
- **1,954** Shelf-Stable food boxes, Fresh Produce Bags, BACN Bags and Commodities delivered
- **113** Volunteers provided **9,820** hours
- Served **19,418** Congregate and Curbside Meals to **1,273** people at The Gathering Place Senior Center
- **176** individuals received Project Senior Fresh \$25 Coupons with a value of \$4,400
- **90,735** total meals prepared – **3rd HIGHEST YEAR**

Home Services by The Numbers

- **4,012** Personal Care Visits
- **501** Respite Care Visits
- **1,511** RN visits for assessments, medication management & in-home foot care – **RECORD**
- **12,246** hours provided to **127** in-home service Clients
- **3,468** homemaking services hours to **103** clients
- **1,078** snowplows to **173** clients—**RECORD**

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Health & Safety Services by The Numbers

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

Support Services by The Numbers

- **302** individuals were provided **15,879** free Benzie Bus rides
- **643** non-emergency medical Healthrides provided – **RECORD**
- **243** individuals received Income Tax Preparation Assistance at no cost to them
- **154** 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 **\$29,064**
- **13** individuals received financial assistance through the Senior Essential Needs Fund Program
- **84** individuals obtained free Estate Planning advice through the partnership with Swogger, Bruce & Miller Law Firm – **RECORD**

TOWNSHIP REPORT – CLIENTS SERVED

# of Services	Almira	Benzonia	Blaine	Colfax	Crystal Lake	Gilmore	Homestead	Inland
1 Service	100	190	33	15	68	36	145	81
2-3 Services	66	159	18	10	51	32	121	76
4-6 Services	17	43	7	7	14	12	54	20
7+ Services	2	7	0	0	0	2	8	3
Total Clients	185	399	58	32	133	82	328	180

# of Services	Joyfield	Lake	Platte	Weldon	City of Frankfort	Grand Total	Percentage
1 Service	39	58	33	27	97	922	48%
2-3 Services	27	34	28	23	75	720	38%
4-6 Services	9	14	2	7	29	235	12%
7+ Services	3	1	2	0	1	29	2%
Total Clients	78	107	65	57	202	1,906	100%

TOP TEN PROGRAMS & SERVICES FOR 2024:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congregate Meals & The Gathering Place Activities 2. Home Delivered Meals 3. Shelf-Stable Foods Boxes & Bags 4. RN Visits 5. Foot Clinic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Non-emergency Health Rides 7. Respite Care Visits 8. General Transportation 9. Snow Removal 10. Tax Preparation/Medicare Help |
|---|--|

Volunteer Giving
 *172 Agency Volunteers
 *12,653 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.

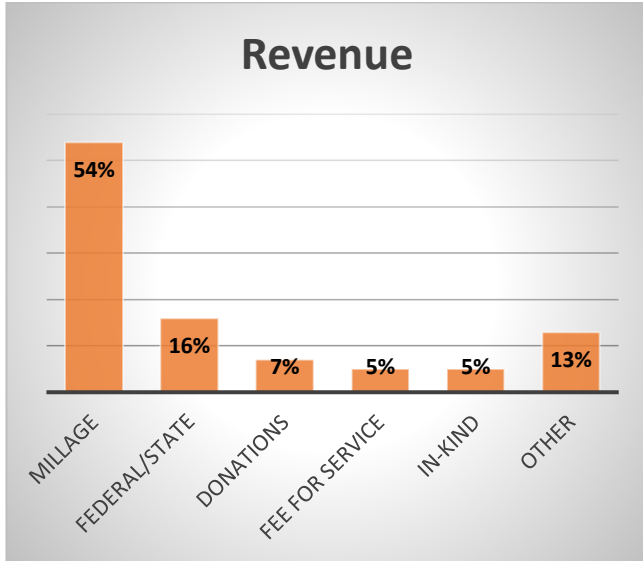
- Every day, **10 or more** volunteers are needed to help deliver up to 200 meals
- It takes **8 or more** Gathering Place volunteers to keep those doors open each day

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

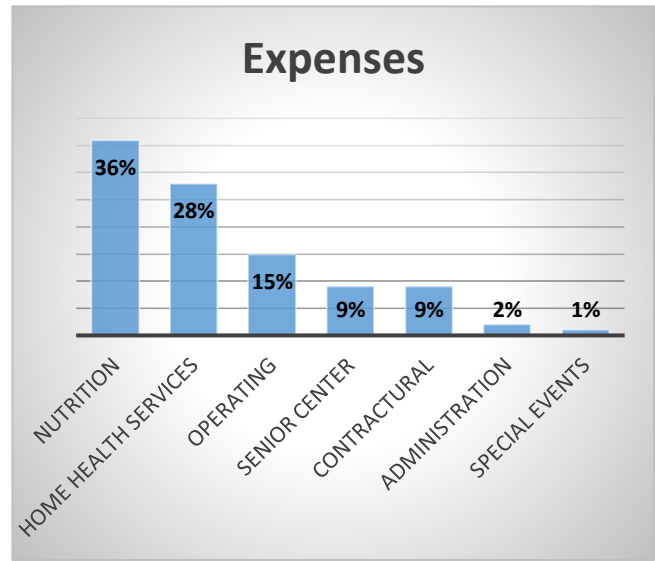
2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

TOTAL REVENUE



Total Income \$2,471,063

TOTAL EXPENSES



Total Expenses \$2,417,933

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 2024 Benzie Senior Resources Board of Directors:

Nancy Mullen Call | President
Paul Turner | Vice President
Victor Dinsmoore | Treasurer
Leo Hughes | Secretary
Reverend Dinah Haag
Robert Manilla
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 Goal:

To assist Benzie County seniors in remaining healthy and living independently in their own homes

"I appreciate all the volunteers. On Wednesday they make sure I'm home or call to find me. I appreciate that they worry about me and all the others who get Meals on Wheels. Thank you!"

~ Michael

"I have only been getting meals since this summer. Now that there is snow and the roads are sometimes bad, I appreciate knowing the food is coming. I think that keeps me from trying to get out and taking risks I know I shouldn't." ~ Christine

Volunteers showing the community what BSR is all about during Beulah's 4th of July Parade



New in 2024, Coffee and Donuts with Vets is a monthly time for our valued veterans, their families and friends to gather, share time together and learn about veteran-based community resources



Sabra was with us for 17 years. Her passing left a void in our office, and a hole in our hearts.



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