

S:US

SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED

**New Yorkers
STANDING
TOGETHER**



A SOCIAL JUSTICE CAMPAIGN / 2021 THROUGH 2025



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At S:US, we are committed to continuously advancing measures for social justice and creating opportunities for the most vulnerable among us.

Perry Perlmutter
President and CEO
Services for the UnderServed
(S:US)



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OUR BEGINNINGS

Services for the UnderServed (S:US) was founded in 1978 in response to a major shift in public health policy that led to the de-institutionalization of people with developmental disabilities and the de-institutionalization of people with mental health challenges. At that time, very few community-based organizations existed to serve people with disabilities.


While public policy was shifting, the response to supporting people to have a life in the community was slow to catch up. For people living in Willowbrook, the State School on Staten Island, the horrific conditions of that institution were publicly exposed and the “civil rights disability movement” organized by family members and friends led to a Federal Court mandate that required NY State to close the institution and create residences with supports in the community. Conversely, for people with mental health challenges, the downsizing of institutions that began in the late 1960’s did not result in an increase in community housing and services; in part resulting in a rise in homelessness.

S:US responded to these calls to action, developing its first residences with supports for people with

developmental disabilities; and for people with mental health challenges; and developing shelters for families; and a food program. What sets S:US apart from most organizations in these early years, was our delivery of services in communities impacted by poverty and marginalized because of racial bias, and a lack of access to safe affordable housing, health care, education, jobs and economic dignity.

While our mission to support people to transform their lives started with housing with tailored services, it did not end there. For more than 45 years S:US has responded to the challenges and negative impact of disability, unnecessary institutionalization and incarceration, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, addiction, poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement.

We offer vulnerable New Yorkers an individualized toolkit of supports and services that break down barriers to health care, education, employment, behavioral health treatment, food, child care, and community living. Our approach recognizes the unique needs of those we serve and recognizes the aspirations of their communities.



We work to benefit
the greatest
number of people
we can by engaging with
the communities we serve.

In this way,
WE ARE
OF THE COMMUNITY,
not just
in the community.

In advancing our Mission – *driving scalable solutions to transform the lives of people with disabilities, people in poverty and people facing homelessness: solutions that contribute to righting societal imbalances* -- we work to benefit the greatest number of people we can by engaging with the communities we serve. In this way, we are of the community, not just in the community.

The foundation of our service philosophy is simple but powerful -- a belief that every person, regardless of the circumstances of their life, should be treated with dignity and respect. We give people hope, providing a path to a bright future for themselves, their families, and their communities -- a future not defined by challenges, but by the promise of “**Opportunity for All.**”

The complexity of the challenges and issues we seek to address do not deter us. We are New Yorkers who believe that enlightened self-interest requires that we care about **ALL** New Yorkers.



OUR VISION

We work towards a future where our vision becomes reality—*living in a city where everyone has a roof over*

their head, is healthy, productive and can enjoy the social connections that create a life of purpose.

OUR APPROACH

S:US' service model is innovative, person-centered, and rooted in choice and self-direction. We do not presume that we know more about people's needs than they themselves do. Everyone is the authority on their own life and their own needs. Each person brings with them a unique set of circumstances and personal histories, identities and experiences shaped by the opportunities available to them, and influencing the decisions they have made. This is why at S:US, we don't prescribe paths that define people but offer solutions that support each person's definition of a life of purpose. To do this, establishing a relationship is step one. We partner with each individual and family in identifying and working towards specific goals, and in determining the appropriate mix of supports and services necessary to achieve them.

S:US' positive impact on communities where we are present cannot be overstated. S:US' programs and services can be found in 43 of the city's 59 community boards. This expansive reach gives us access to a network

of opportunities across the city, covering a multitude of disciplines and needs—all of which we can make available to the communities we serve.

Social, racial, and economic equity strengthens our communities, and we are committed to creating opportunities that generate permanent, positive change. We are leaders in city- and state-wide coalitions advocating for policy changes to improve the lives of vulnerable New Yorkers, including effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in the city, adequate funding for services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and accountability for the people and institutions charged with keeping our communities safe and healthy.

At S:US, our intent in providing *Opportunity for All*, is to help build a better New York for all New Yorkers.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION AT S:US

S:US is a unique organization that not only fights for social justice for individuals but also works on the ground to make real, sustainable, and enduring change in communities.

A place to call home, access to education, a job, friends and family, a community - these are the most basic elements we all hope for as we seek to lead a satisfying life. However, if you are a person with an intellectual disability or an individual with mental health challenges, our systems and communities often deny you these basic rights. If you are Black, Brown, an indigenous person, or LGBTQ, your opportunities for these basic elements are often out of reach.

S:US works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to overcome these injustices. On the broad, systemic levels, our leadership works to change policies and regulations that are discriminatory and unjust. At the local levels, our leadership and staff work with elected representatives, community boards, civic associations and neighborhood groups to break down the stigma that often accompanies the people we serve, and to help ensure their full integration and acknowledgement as participating citizens of their communities.

We work to ensure that the solutions we offer are grounded in and emerge from the people experiencing injustices. Our impact is evident in both systemic and practical, day-to-day examples of how our world is changed for the better through our work. While we are proud of our accomplishments, we know there is much still to be done.

As New Yorkers, homelessness and poverty affect us all. Affordable housing, access to health care, educational opportunities, and healthy foods; the availability of a trained and dedicated workforce; safe communities -- all are impacted by how we choose to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. S:US does it by partnering with the people we serve and investing in our communities.

Everyone needs safe, quality, and stable housing, and housing is at the core of S:US' work. For some of the most vulnerable people in New York—people with mental health challenges, chronic health conditions, histories of trauma, and other challenges—having a home is the first step on the path to stability, security, and well-being. But we know that housing is only part of the solution. Some people face conditions that make it difficult to maintain a stable home and may need services wrapped into their housing.



A place to call home, access to education,
a job, friends and family,
a community -
these are the **most basic** elements
we all hope for as we seek to
lead a **satisfying life**.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION AT S:US (continued)

S:US' services help interrupt and break cycles that have held people back as we provide the supports necessary for people to overcome challenges. We help vulnerable people understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants, meet their obligations, and avoid eviction; we make sure that people with chronic illnesses and substance use or mental health challenges manage their diet and medical needs, helping to keep them out of hospitals, nursing homes, or other facilities; we help people with disabilities access better health care, secure and sustain employment with ongoing support, and contribute meaningfully to their community; our Urban Farms initiative provides education and experiences through horticulture, expanding access to fresh and healthy food, increasing understanding of nutrition, and improving health and wellness

Some of us face more barriers than others because of **who we are**, **what we look like**, or **where we come from**.

outcomes; we provide stable and positive conditions that reduce the use of costly systems like emergency health services; we create opportunities and change economic dynamics to keep people out of the criminal legal system, or support the transition back to society from a period of incarceration; we help families stay together when facing challenges.

As New Yorkers, we pride ourselves on being leaders, on supporting our neighbors, on our own resilience and that of our city, on embracing diversity, and on advancing social justice and racial equity.

Yet we also know that inequity persists, and that its effects can be devastating. Some of us face more barriers than others because of who we are, what we look like, or where we come from. Systemic biases in our education, health care, and criminal legal

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a crowd of people at a protest. In the foreground, a person's right fist is raised and clenched. The background is filled with other people, some wearing dark clothing, and the scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

**While we are proud of
our accomplishments,
we know...**

THERE IS MUCH STILL TO BE DONE.

systems, and implicit bias in hiring and lending practices harm socially and economically marginalized people and communities. These biases deny opportunity, and lead to unjust outcomes in housing, employment, health, life expectancy, and overall quality of life.

At S:US we believe that when each of us is better off, we are all better off. We understand that for there to be long-term

social change, we must invest in people and communities. For more than 45 years, S:US has worked with and in underserved and underrepresented communities. We understand these communities as our roots run deep, and we understand the tools that people need to empower themselves and to improve their life circumstances.

FUNDING NEED

Since its founding, S:US has been a leader in providing services to vulnerable New Yorkers. We are known for the innovative, adaptable, and inclusive approach that enables us to serve more than 37,000 people each year. Government grants provide resources to cover most of the basic costs to run our programs, but S:US' work is not just about helping people achieve the bare minimum, and public funding does not pay for all of the investments required to ensure access to opportunity for all people. Private philanthropy becomes vital to S:US' ability to provide essential, innovative services and ensure excellence.

- **Government does not fund innovation**, testing new approaches to improve life outcomes for the individuals and communities we serve.
- **Government does not provide seed money** to roll out the operation of a new service/program that has the potential of improving lives.
- **Government does not fund service enhancement** that supports the difference between good and great.
- **Government does not fund investment in technology** - connectivity and applications:
 - Technology that can be life saving for those we serve;
 - Technology that can support greater independence;
 - Technology that can connect children to the wealth of educational materials that exist;
 - Technology that can connect people in real time to support;
 - Technology that enables us to create health records to deliver coordinated care and that allows individuals access to their own records.



S:US

- **Government does not provide funds to ensure that the housing we build and manage is preserved** and remains in good condition. The condition of our buildings demonstrates the respect we have for those who call it home.
- **Government does not provide funds to retrofit buildings** to reduce our carbon footprint and improve energy efficiency.
- **Government does not fund initiatives** like our urban farms - an initiative that has a powerful impact on people's lives - offering healthful food, employment, and a sense of community.
- **Government does not support the small things** that make a huge difference - allowing us to offer life enriching experiences to those we serve — social and recreational experiences, cultural exposure, etc.



FUNDING NEED (continued)

Many of S:US' programs are not fully funded through government grants and contracts, and some rely entirely on philanthropy. Here are just a few examples of where funding is most needed:

- **Applied Behavior Analysis**, an evidence-based practice which teaches communication and social skills to people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. A proven approach that leads to decreased reliance on medical interventions and greater independence. This requires specialized training and personnel, costs that are not reimbursable under our government contracts;
- Our **Brooklyn Clubhouse** offers member-driven, comprehensive, communal recovery and rehabilitation services to adults living with serious mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use. The Clubhouse provides valuable social and vocational opportunities along with assistance in developing critical life coping and job skills. Peer counselors drive and enhance the recovery-oriented environment supporting member participation in all aspects of its operation. A transitional employment program also operates out of the Clubhouse, with the goal of strengthening members' work record and skills;
- Services in our **domestic violence and family shelters**, where government funding does not cover the full cost of ensuring that families have the safe and supportive environment necessary to begin to cope with their traumatic experiences and prepare for the future;
- Innovative approaches to treatment in our **clinics**, including opioid addiction treatment and telehealth, cannot be sustained effectively with government funding alone;
- Funding for **capital improvement projects** in the 180 buildings that S:US owns or operates, including renovations, upkeep and maintenance, so that everyone who walks into any S:US location experiences safety, comfort and a welcoming environment;
- More than 75 **urban farms and gardens** which rely entirely on donations and S:US to sustain operations. Designing, purchasing materials and building out a farm, teaching the individuals we support employable skills like bee-keeping and landscaping, all require a philanthropic investment;

- COVID-19 has changed the way we live and work, and some of those changes have become permanent. We continue to utilize a hybrid of in-office and remote work. This requires a significant investment in **technology and infrastructure** that encourages collaboration and communication that allow staff to make informed decisions while also providing professional development and enrichment experience to strengthen our workforce. Service delivery itself also relies on continuous upgrades of new technology, including assistive technology for people with developmental challenges, to provide the high-quality services for which S:US is known.

“

Philanthropy lies
at the heart of human greatness

Patrick J. Ryan
Philanthropist

FUNDING NEED (continued)

The ***New Yorkers Standing Together*** Campaign seeks to expand investments from the private sector to ensure the sustainability and growth of our critical services. The high-quality services and supports that S:US provides require resources that are not supported by government funding alone. Support from individuals, foundations, and corporations will make the difference in keeping our programs strong, and increases the impact we are able to have on the lives of people and communities.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

WE RELY ON YOU!

Your donation drives our ability to go beyond the basics, and to create change that has real impact.

We hope we can count on your support of S:US' ***New Yorkers Standing Together*** Campaign. Your multi-year pledge is an investment in our shared future as New Yorkers and a recognition that providing opportunity for vulnerable populations is the right thing to do and makes sense for all of us.

Thank you!



New Yorkers
STANDING
TOGETHER



DONATE NOW

YES, I want to support S:US by making a donation in the amount of:

- \$25.00
- \$50.00
- \$100.00
- \$250.00
- \$500.00
- \$750.00
- \$1,000.00
- \$1,500.00
- \$2,000.00
- \$2,500.00
- \$5,000.00
- \$10,000.00



An aerial photograph of New York City, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The Hudson River is visible on the right side, and the East River is on the left. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a wide-angle, high-altitude view of the city.

S:US

SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED

PROGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES

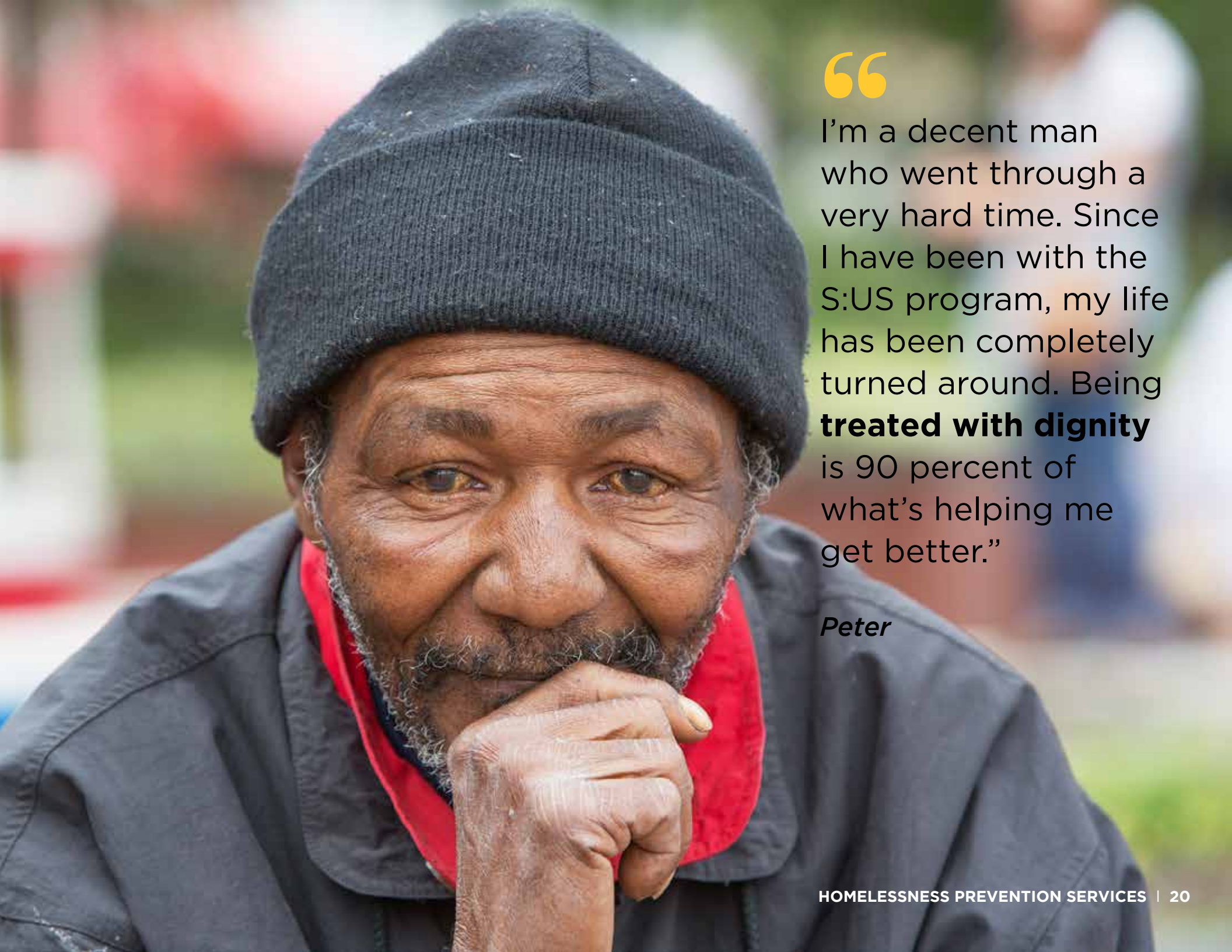
S:US provides outreach and services to individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Our Homebase resource center provides anti-eviction services to solve immediate housing crises, divert individuals at risk from the shelter system and address other issues that place individuals at greatest risk for homelessness.

For New Yorkers whose circumstances lead to homelessness:

- S:US' 12 shelters throughout the city provide temporary housing, food, access to mental health and addiction treatment and health care to 1,300 adults and children every day/night.

- Our specialty shelters are designed to meet the unique needs of domestic violence survivors, families with children, and adults with mental health and addiction challenges. Our goal is to assist with access to permanent housing, education, jobs and health care.

We help individuals and families transition from shelters or other short-term housing to safe, stable housing environments, and assist them in getting linked to whatever ongoing services they need -- medical, mental health, or addiction treatment. And we provide time-limited aftercare services to former shelter residents, focused on empowering them to manage life in their new home and community.



“

I'm a decent man who went through a very hard time. Since I have been with the S:US program, my life has been completely turned around. Being **treated with dignity** is 90 percent of what's helping me get better.”

Peter

HOUSING

Housing has always been at the core of what we do as we understand that safe, affordable housing is essential to health, emotional well-being and economic dignity.

- Every day we serve 4,500 individuals in housing, offering person-centered supports that help provide the foundation of stability and resources needed to rebuild lives.
- S:US currently operates approximately 2,600 permanent supportive and affordable housing units. We offer transitional and permanent housing in single site residences, apartment buildings, and scattered site apartments for adults in recovery from mental illness and adults with addiction challenges, providing safe environments that promote independent living, and the support necessary to help individuals move beyond their diagnoses. For people with low-incomes, housing costs limit access to other basic needs like health care, food, and quality child care.

We have built an expertise as a non-profit housing developer accessing federal tax credit, tax-exempt bonds and other subsidies to develop housing for individuals and families who are homeless many with behavioral health and health challenges and individuals disadvantaged by poverty. We have partnered with communities in our development efforts to address community needs and have partnered with for-profit housing developers with common values to expand our reach and housing development efforts.

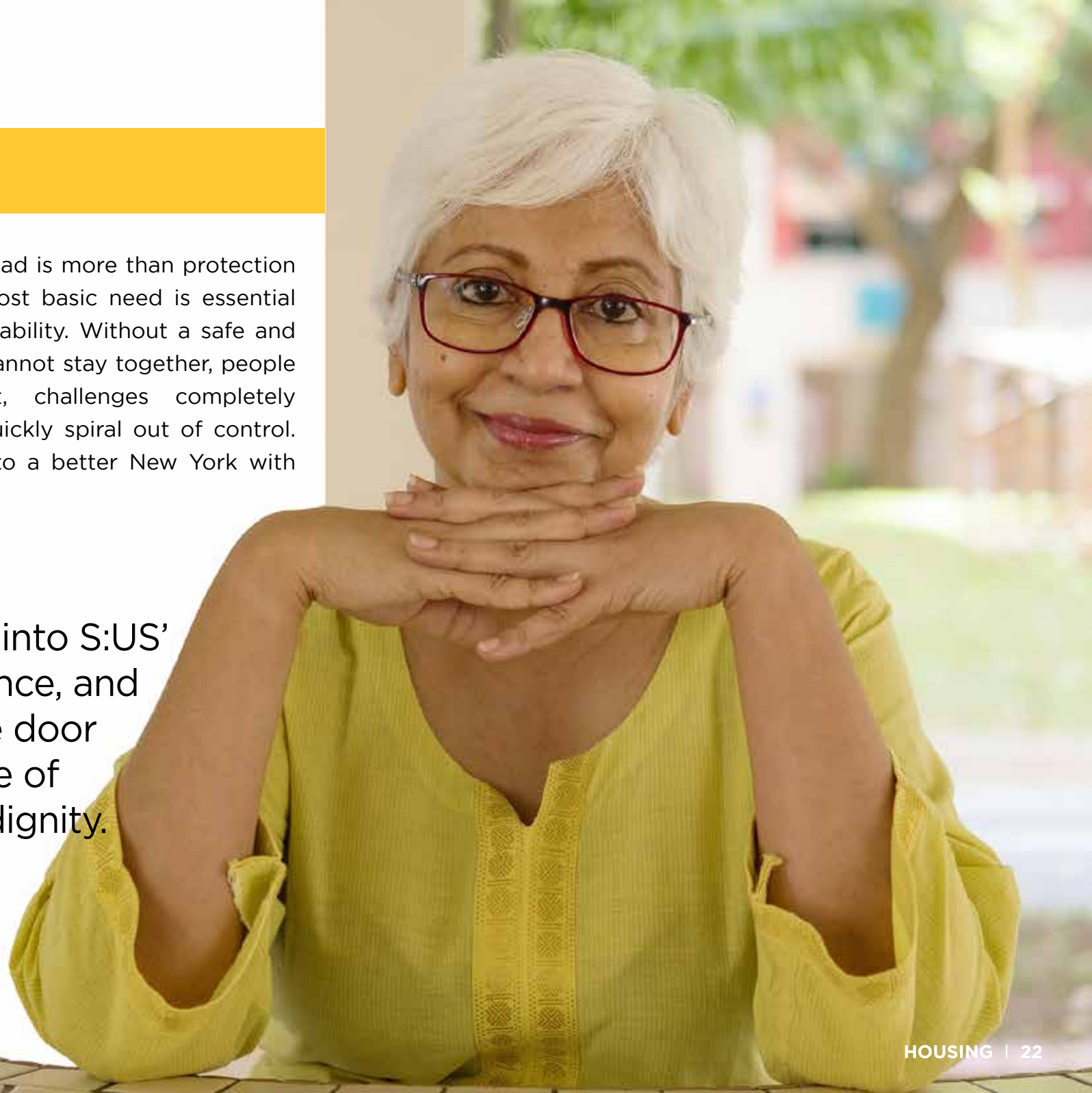
- To date we have developed 930 units of permanent supportive and low-income housing with over 1,900 units in pre-development and/or construction. Housing development is a powerful example of how social impact investment and private/public partnerships can work for all.

Having a roof over one's head is more than protection from the elements. This most basic need is essential to achieving any kind of stability. Without a safe and affordable home, families cannot stay together, people cannot find employment, challenges completely overwhelm, and life can quickly spiral out of control. At S:US we're committed to a better New York with *Housing for All*.

“

The day I walked into S:US' Third Ave Residence, and put the key in the door I got back a sense of self-respect and dignity. I have **a place to call home** again.

Evelyn



TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

Many families have some experience with mental health and/or substance use challenges. Mental illness is the leading cause of disability worldwide and only 9% of the 22.7 million Americans with drug or alcohol addiction challenges are receiving treatment. S:US is breaking down barriers and opening new doors, offering the right set of supports as we work together with people believing in their potential to recover, lead productive lives, and move past their challenges.

S:US' personalized wrap around services include counseling, Medication Assistive Treatment, care coordination, recovery and rehabilitation support, peer supports, job development, and job coaching.

Our Pathway Home programs wrap intensive services including connection to housing around individuals leaving long-term hospitalization and criminal justice involvements.


Our transitional residential treatment serves individuals with both mental health and /or addiction challenges offering intensive treatment and critical time intervention that enable individuals to stabilize so they can prepare

to move on to less intensive services, and other community supports, and to build a life.

Our residential crisis services offer a supportive environment to prevent unnecessary hospitalization for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis

S:US' Treatment and Rehabilitation services work with individuals with behavioral health challenges who are at highest risk for homelessness, unemployment, untreated medical, psychiatric and substance use disorders, and disconnection from family, social and other natural supports. We serve approximately 4,200 individuals with behavioral health challenges annually. These individuals are referred to S:US from homeless shelters, shelter-based mental health programs, hospitals, clinics, day programs, and programs serving people involved in the criminal justice system.

S:US' out-patient clinics and residential treatment services help adults with substance use and/or mental health challenges by providing individual and group therapy, medication management, peer support, and assistance with other community resources. Our Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team serves those whose needs have not



been met by traditional clinic-based approaches, delivering treatment to people in their homes, shelters, parks, or anywhere else they may be living, engaging them in a sustained relationship that is more likely to lead to recovery.

S:US offers treatment and rehabilitation services in environments replete with opportunities for self-improvement, and offered in a manner that is respectful, valued and validating, with an emphasis on genuine, participatory, informed choice. Wrap-around support includes employment programs; a peer support model offering opportunities for community participation and social and recreational opportunities; mental health services; and case management. As with all of our programs, we meet each individual where they are, offering support and services that address their unique and particular needs.

“

Seeing people come into the Respite center one way and leave another, maybe closer to their friends and family, maybe more hopeful, feeling like, **‘I am in control of my life.’ - that’s really powerful!**

Oscar

SERVICES FOR VETERANS

S:US is one of NYC's largest providers of services to veterans, serving 3,000 New York City and Long Island veterans and their families each year.

Since 1995, when S:US opened its first supportive housing site dedicated to homeless veterans with behavioral health challenges, our work with veterans has focused on housing stability, physical and behavioral health care, and employment. S:US develops trusting relationships with those we serve by encouraging veteran-to-veteran mentorship. Many of our program staff have similar life experiences, which is key during program design and delivery.

S:US' Veterans Services offers a full spectrum of housing, employment, and treatment programs for veterans facing a wide range of co-occurring

challenges as they return to the civilian community post-deployment. We provide integrated and coordinated care that ensures all services are person-centered and needs-based. This cohesive support system facilitates successful family reunification and community reintegration for veterans, prevents homelessness, and supports career development.

Our specialty Veterans services prevent homelessness among veterans, by providing direct rental subsidies and linking veterans to housing, treatment, education and training, and employment.

We provide supportive services for veteran families, education and employment programs, permanent housing, and aftercare planning.

“

When everybody
turned me down
S:US picked me up
and put the broken
pieces back together.
They gave me a **new
start.**

Robert

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

About one in six children in the U.S. is living with a developmental disability, and one in 68 has been identified on the autism spectrum. As these children reach adulthood and “age out” of services geared towards young people, they and their families face unique, and pressing needs. Our programs for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities provide the right supports to support them to live and receive services in the community of their choice, build and enjoy social connections, deepen relationships with family and friends, and—most importantly—direct their own lives and experience life to their fullest potential.

Our supports and services for individuals with intellectual/development disabilities and their families include a comprehensive array of supports to enable individuals to lead happy, productive lives. These supports include residential, day habilitation, community habilitation, vocational, clinical, employment, family support, therapeutic coaching and residential crisis services.

S:US’ residential services provide access to medical, nursing, psychological, nutritional and employment

services to people living in integrated community settings. Our Day and Community Habilitation Programs help reduce barriers to inclusion by building on each individual’s practical skills, building social skills, strengthening relationships, and providing assistance with independent living. S:US uses Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to teach appropriate communication and social skills that improve individual’s opportunities to engage in the community, and the application of the principles of ABA have been shown to lead to a decrease in medication, decrease in emergency room visits, and greater independence.

S:US also offers family supports for economically disadvantaged families who have children with intellectual/developmental disabilities as well as crises prevention and response services for individuals and families in need. Individuals in our programs can participate in S:US’ annual Family Fun Day; the Best Buddies program, which creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships between people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and peers in the corporate and civic communities; and other social and enrichment experiences.



“

The world often puts our individuals into little boxes and sets their limits. But at S:US, we try to **open the whole world** to them.

*Jajaida
S:US Staff Member*

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY AND URBAN FARMS

In 2022, the rate of food insecurity in New York City was 14.6% (representing 1.2 million residents) with higher rates in low-income neighborhoods and Black and Hispanic households. S:US' own research found that over half of the people we serve report food insecurity.

S:US provides over 2 million meals per year. We believe in food as a basic right. We also believe in person-centered care: that everyone has a right to choices and direction in their own care. We believe that food should be available and accessible to all communities. These beliefs compel us to engage in the food justice movement.

In 2020, we created the S:US **Food Security Resource Hub**, an online space for assembling and sharing food security information. Our **Community Fridge Program** was launched in 2022 and is anticipated to grow to five locations at S:US group homes for people with disabilities and supportive housing sites in 2024. They provide fresh produce and basic pantry items to individuals and families in underserved New York City neighborhoods. Fridges are stocked and maintained by people who attend S:US day habilitation programs, giving them an

opportunity to help others while connecting with members of their local communities.

Our **Tote Bag Program**, begun in 2023, offers families with children living in S:US supportive housing residences free locally sourced fruits, vegetables and other shelf stable items with a goal of decreasing food insecurity on school breaks, when low-income families experience higher levels of food insecurity since their children are not receiving food assistance at school. S:US' day habilitation program participants with intellectual disabilities deliver food directly to each family's home to reduce any potential stigma that families may feel in visiting a food pantry.

Our **Urban Farms Program** is one of the largest urban agriculture initiatives in NYC and has now expanded to over 20,000 square feet of growing space in the yards and on rooftops of our residences across 75 locations throughout the City producing over 10,000 lbs. of produce annually, equaling more than 8,500 meals with a market value over \$45,000. Harvests are distributed among residents of S:US' supportive housing sites free of charge, extending health and wellness benefits beyond those who work in the urban farms and gardens. Recent exceptional harvests

from several community farm sites led us to pilot a redistribution program to deliver fresh produce to other S:US programs and residents experiencing food insecurity.

Our Urban Farms employ many of the people we serve who have intellectual/developmental disabilities and each year engage more than 600 people at the highest risk for homelessness, unemployment, and untreated medical, psychiatric, and substance use disorders. Participants gain employable skills, generate income, build self-esteem, and learn about and enjoy the nourishing benefits of eating fresh produce. Our vocational training curriculum focuses on general and specialized horticulture and produce preservation through canning. Workshops teach hard and soft skills to prepare individuals for community volunteerism and employment opportunities. S:US Urban Farms is one of the few therapeutic horticulture services in the country to engage individuals with disabilities in beekeeping. Participants aren't just watering, weeding, and harvesting. They construct greenhouses, cold frames, arbors, raised beds, and sheds; and install water features, patios, and rooftop gardens.



“

I think S:US staff did an excellent job here. I learned a lot, and hopefully my skills will help me get a job in the future. I'm happy I did it and I'm very proud of myself.

Elizabeth

LEADERSHIP



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The injustices in our society ultimately create a universe of highly systemic and individual obstacles.” At S:US, we don’t prescribe paths that define people, but instead offer solutions that address each person’s unique circumstances and support each person’s definition of a life of purpose. This work propels individuals and families to a new engagement with the world, creating a ripple effect that extends from them out into their communities.

We believe that progress in addressing the systemic inequalities experienced by so many in our own community requires a shared commitment to provide not just the bare necessities to meet any individual’s fundamental needs, but also the supports that allow every person to achieve a full and self-directed life of purpose.

No New Yorker should struggle alone when we can all stand together.

This is how we beat back stigma.
This is how we build communities.

Please join us today!

This is how we create **Opportunity for All.**

Updated 2/2024

