

## UUAA Alpha House Committee Annual Report 2020-2021

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Overview: Alpha House is an emergency shelter for children and their families, who are temporarily experiencing temporary homelessness and is the only family and children shelter in Washtenaw County. This is a key component to the priority of the congregation identified in the vision 20/50 report: **anti-racism and anti-oppression work**.

UUAA hosts four weeks each year: June, November, January and April, and in 2020 we added a special host week in September. Volunteers donate and dishes for the dinner each night, drop off a hot breakfast on weekends and school holidays, and supervise children's activity time outdoors when it is safe to do so. Committee members help with tasks like making children's activity packets, calling activity time volunteers; and purchase groceries and supplies for the host week.

### Key accomplishments:

- Full Thanksgiving dinner during November host week, even though none of us were in the kitchen.
- Added a special host week in September when no other congregation was hosting.
- Donated activities and games to keep families entertained during COVID.
- Collected DVDs to donate to Alpha House in 2020 when they were showing a movie every night for the kids.
- Continued reducing food waste by freezing fruit and making smoothies at the end of the week.

### Supporting Alpha House during COVID-19:

Worked with IHN staff to buy COVID preparedness supplies for the shelter each time we hosted. Changed volunteer roles to keep volunteers as well as residents and staff safe. We updated our sign-up genius online to keep up with changing needs. Dozens of UUAA donors contributed financial contributions to support our host week (these were sent to UUAA or donated online on UUAA.org). Committee members searched the internet for fun and engaging content to share with Alpha House parents.

In 2020, in the middle of a global pandemic, over 100 volunteers filled 420 unique spots on our signups. We even took on a special week in September in addition to what we usually do. Thank you to all of those volunteers! For a personal thank you, check out my message in the Social Justice Connections segment of the [January 17<sup>th</sup> online service](#) titled **Articulate Dreams: Hope from Voices of Color and Community**.