



# SPOP

Service Program for Older People

2023-2024 | ANNUAL REPORT





## Letter from the CEO and President

Left to right: Meaghan Atkinson, Nancy Harvey, Patricia Caldwell

*Fiscal year 2023-24 was a period of transition, as Nancy Harvey retired after 34 years at the helm of SPOP and Chief Program Officer Catherine Thurston prepared to take on the role of Chief Executive Officer. We are pleased to report that it was a well-planned and smooth succession, with adequate time to debrief, prepare for new leadership, and celebrate Nancy's many achievements.*

During the program year, our top priority was to provide the highest-quality behavioral and mental healthcare for our client population. Recognizing the increased need in the community and greater severity of symptoms in many incoming cases, we:

- Expanded our group therapy offerings, with a goal to address social isolation and enhance therapeutic support;
- Developed an Enhanced Care program designed to stabilize high-acuity clients;





Left to right: Catherine Thurston, Nancy Harvey

- Provided staff training in trauma-centered treatment, substance misuse, and other topics;
- Offered expanded services to support aging in place; and
- Partnered with the faith community to offer training, information sessions, and mental health screenings for older adults.

**SPOP had a profound impact on the quality of life of older New Yorkers.** The agency completed over 26,000 professional mental health services for 960 older adults, and in our annual survey, clients reported:

- Greater ability to manage daily challenges (95%)
- Progress toward treatment goals (93%)
- Greater likelihood to call SPOP rather than 911 in case of a mental health challenge (91%)
- Increased self-confidence (89%)

We are grateful to the SPOP Board of Directors, staff, and community of donors, whose dedication and support have made New York City a better place for adults to grow older.

*Catherine Thurston*  
**Catherine Thurston, LCSW**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

*Meaghan Atkinson*  
**Meaghan Atkinson**  
PRESIDENT





The mission of Service Program for Older People is to enhance the quality of life of older adults and to foster their independent living through the delivery of comprehensive mental health and supportive services, advocacy and education.

Annie Hughes Cloke and Lois Akner

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SPOP offers a continuum of outpatient services for adults age 55 and older including individual and group psychotherapy, psychiatry, assessments, processing of all inquiries and referrals, and linkages to services to address social health needs. Based at our central offices, the clinic offers appointments on-site, via telehealth, and at satellite locations in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn.

## *Clinic, Community Programs, STRIVE, and Intake*

Our staff is comprised of psychiatric social workers, psychiatrists, intake specialists, and a psychiatric nurse practitioner. All are experienced in working with adults age 55 and older and many are proficient in a second language. Clinical staff receive ongoing training in best practices, treatment modalities, and specialties such as trauma, substance misuse, intimate partner abuse, or caregiver distress.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year we completed over 24,000 professional sessions with 887 individuals, for an average of 27 sessions per client over the course of the year.

**The Clinic, SPOP's largest program, served clients from every borough of New York City in 2023-24.** The client population is overwhelmingly low-income, medically frail, and socially isolated. Over 90% are retired or not working, and 79% are widowed, single, or divorced.

A priority this year was to expand our capacity to provide trauma-centered psychotherapy and to support clients experiencing alcohol or substance misuse. We increased staff capacity and

expertise in these areas and also launched a pilot program to offer Enhanced Care services for high-acuity clients who need extra support to de-escalate a crisis, re-regulate their emotional state, and manage their safety. Services include multiple sessions during a week and check-in calls, with a goal to stabilize the client, avert hospitalization, and transition them to traditional therapy.

**The Community Programs team manages a network of satellite clinic offices in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx,** which are co-located at older adult centers and other programs that serve an older population. Each satellite location is licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health, and seven are supported by the **Geriatric Mental Health program of NYC Aging.**

Through these community partnerships SPOP is able to reach out to individuals who would not otherwise have access to mental healthcare.

**STRIVE is a pilot program supported by a Geriatric Service Demonstration grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health,** which enables SPOP to work in partnership with NYC Aging and the addiction treatment program at Metropolitan Center for Mental Health to provide integrated mental healthcare, linkages to medically-supported addiction treatment services, and services to address social health needs and support aging in place. Now in its third year, STRIVE has been successful in assisting clients to avert eviction, secure housing, acquire technology skills, and stabilize mental health symptoms.



Some 85% of STRIVE clients have experienced a reduction in social health needs; 63% have seen improvement in depressive or anxious symptoms; and 88% report that STRIVE services have improved treatment efficacy because they can now focus more intently on their psychiatric care.

**Our intake department is the first stop for all clients.** Our staff, most of whom are bilingual, are trained to guide individuals (and often their caregivers or family members) through the process while providing reassurance and listening closely for signs of urgent need. We use standard screening tools to assess for symptoms and we fast-track all high-acuity cases. We also use a proprietary tool to assess for social determinants of health, and we draw on a database of city-wide resources to refer clients for additional supports such as meals, housing, financial assistance, socialization opportunities, or case management services.

The clinic offers free **Bereavement Support** for adults of all ages and backgrounds. Bereavement groups meet for ten-week cycles, either in person or via telehealth, and are co-facilitated by trained volunteers. All bereavement participants complete an intake interview and are connected to mental health services and other supports as appropriate.

## *During 2023-24 we*

- Completed 24,120 professional sessions
- Provided professional services to 887 individuals
- Processed over 1,600 referrals and inquiries
- Assessed more than 400 individuals for social determinants of health
- Provided intensive support through STRIVE to 40 clients
- Offered six Bereavement Groups

### **In a confidential survey, clients reported:**

- Overall satisfaction with SPOP services (97% of respondents)
- Increased self-confidence (89%)
- Greater likelihood to call SPOP during a mental health challenge (91%)
- Greater capacity to manage a crisis (84%)



*RW, age 65, self-referred to SPOP two years ago for support in managing symptoms of depression, chronic suicidality, and alcohol use. When he found himself facing eviction due to rental arrears, his therapist referred him to STRIVE for support. He was angry, frustrated, and using alcohol to cope with stress. The STRIVE team helped him apply for emergency rental assistance and prepare for hearings, and connected him to a Recovery Peer Advocate who provided support with reducing alcohol consumption. They also encouraged him to enroll in the NYC Aging Do More, Feel Better program which includes mood-boosting activities and weekly meetings with a coach.*

*After a long wait, RW received an emergency grant to cover his rental arrears. Now secure that he is able to remain in his home, RW has “graduated” from STRIVE while he continues with psychotherapy and peer support for alcohol misuse.*

*SJ, age 85, came to SPOP reporting intense anxiety which culminated in hyper vigilance, insomnia, and social paranoia to the point that she rarely left her home and had cut off contact with friends. She engaged in therapy using telehealth, and early in treatment her clinician helped her discover severe sexual and emotional trauma first from abusive family members and later from her spouse. She was able to describe events in detail but with complete emotional detachment. Through deep empathy, psychoeducation, careful reflection, and somatic exercises she was able to establish safety in the treatment setting. She is now in the process of allowing and releasing her body’s response to the trauma as she works to come into the present. She is sleeping better and is able to leave her apartment, have conversations and meals with neighbors, and interact with store clerks without feeling overcome with suspicions.*



# *Personalized Recovery Oriented Services/PROS*

The *Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS)* program provides age-affirming psychiatric rehabilitation groups, psychiatry, medication management, meals, and recreation services to older adults with serious mental illness. PROS uses a unique model that encourages participants to identify and work toward personal goals such as employment, obtaining housing, learning to use a computer, or forming a friendship. PROS participants are all low-income and the majority are referred by psychiatric hospitals or other institutional settings. Our program is the only one of its kind in New York State and is defined by three key features:

- We focus on recovery and rehabilitation, new concepts for many adults whose lives have been defined largely by their illness.
- Participants are encouraged to attend on a part-time basis while participating in other community-based activities and programs.
- Participants play an active role in the design and structure of groups – which means they gain skills in collaboration, planning, and communication.

The PROS population is marginalized on multiple levels. For most participants this is their first experience in a recovery-oriented setting after a lifetime of care in a “maintenance” environment.

The PROS staff is comprised of social workers, creative arts therapists, a psychiatrist and psychiatric nurse practitioner, a certified peer specialist, a vocational counselor, and recovery counselors.

## *This year the PROS program*

- Completed 2,189 professional services
- Served 61 participants
- Offered a mix of on-site and telehealth services
- Served lunch three days each week and organized holiday meals and celebrations throughout the year
- Launched new groups on Workplace Readiness, Creative Arts, and Technology using iPads purchased with a grant from Columbia Community Service



LT, 72, was referred to SPOP by a treating psychiatrist from a Bronx based hospital. At the time of her admission, she was struggling with symptoms related to a diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder and Delusional Disorder. She stated that she aspires to maintain a healthy and well-balanced life. Her immediate needs included housing insecurity, growing paranoid thought disorder related to trusting her housing, psychiatric and medical providers, as well as growing physical needs that required medical attention and intervention. She reported having very little family or social support in her life and had difficulty trusting new people.

With the help of her PROS counselor, LT was able to prioritize finding and acquiring permanent housing within the first month of her admission all while working with this program's psychiatrist to find a stabilizing medication regimen to manage her psychiatric symptoms. She worked with the nurse practitioner and her counselor to connect to medical providers and specialists she trusts to address her health concerns. LT states that "there is still a great deal of work to be done and goals I want to accomplish" but she marvels at how much and how well she has been able to tackle various needs and tasks with the support of the PROS team.



BK was admitted to SPOP's PROS program last winter following a hospitalization for treatment after a suicide attempt. He was experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression, and he stated that he felt like a failure because he was fired from his job. He was initially reluctant to engage in PROS but began coming in and connecting to his group counselors and others. The counselor, a peer specialist, supported BK through the lens of his own lived experience of working and having a mental health relapse and putting in the recovery work to return to the workforce. As BK began to participate more fully, his posture, groom-

ing and demeanor improved, he was more talkative, and he began to focus on his goal to re-enter the workforce. He participated in our employment group and in drama therapy, where he worked on communication skills. With some ups and downs in finding the right fit, BK's success is not measured by his pursuit of employment, but rather in learning the skills to realize what does and does not work for him. He reports feeling that he is "back in the driver's seat" and is able to let go of feelings that he is "not good enough." He is now focusing on other skills that he can apply in a workplace setting.





## *Training and Initiatives*

This division oversees training programs in aging and mental health for community-based organizations, healthcare or aging services providers, professional consortia, and individuals. We also manage the Career Pathway project funded by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, which supports student interns with a goal to inspire and train future leaders in the field of aging.

This year we offered trainings to over 500 participants and completed several community-based training projects:

- A grant from the Altman Foundation supported training, outreach, and screenings at six churches in Upper Manhattan that serve the Black/African-American community. The goals were to address stigma, train staff and volunteers how to recognize symptoms of mental health disorders, and build awareness of services available in the community.
- Funding from Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, the New York Foundation for Eldercare, and Morningside Heights Community Fund supported trainings in aging and mental health

for aging services providers, staff of city and state legislators, and social workers.

- We offered online Continuing Education training for social workers.
- We provided four training sessions for SPOP staff, with Continuing Education credit available.

Feedback from training participants was overwhelmingly positive:

- 94% reported that they had learned new concepts and would recommend the training session to others.
- 80% reported that the sessions were helpful to their professional development.

In early 2024 we launched the Career Pathway project, which is designed to encour-

age graduate students of social work to pursue careers in aging and mental health.

We have selected three outstanding second-year students from Silberman School of Social Work for the 2024-25 academic year. Each student will receive a stipend and will be matched with a seasoned supervisor who is responsible for guiding them through a series of place-ments in different departments and providing all documentation required by their academic program.





# *Financial Support*

*Left to right: Lauren Weisenfeld; Nancy Harvey, Julio Urbina, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation*

SPOP extends gratitude to the following elected officials, government agencies, and institutional funders that provided financial support in this year.

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine  
New York City Council Member Shaun Abreu  
New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer  
New York City Council Member Keith Powers  
New York City Council Geriatric Mental Health Initiative  
New York City Department for the Aging/NYC Aging  
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
New York State Assemblymember Daniel J. O'Donnell  
New York State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal  
New York State Senator Liz Krueger  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
New York State Department of Health, Child, and Adult Food Care Program

Altman Foundation  
Barker Welfare Fund  
Vladimir and Araxia Buckhantz Foundation  
Florence V. Burden Foundation  
Columbia Community Service  
The Dammann Fund  
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FJC, A Foundation of Donor Advised Funds  
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Hyde and Watson Foundation  
JPMorgan Chase  
Charles & Lucille King Family Foundation

Metzger-Price Fund, Inc.  
Morningside Heights Community Fund  
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation  
The New York Community Trust  
New York Foundation for Eldercare  
The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation  
Edith M. Schweckendieck Trusts  
Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
The Annie Rensselaer Tinker Fund  
Isaac H. Tuttle Fund  
United Way of New York City  
The Laura B. Vogler Foundation





## *SPOP Staff* as of June 30, 2024

Nancy Harvey, LMSW  
 Stephen Beramsingh  
 Johnny Lee  
 Janet Rosenberg  
 Catherine Thurston, LCSW  
 Arianne Dunstan-Halliday, LCSW  
 Jessica Fertig, ATR-BC, LCAT  
 Eeva Mikkola, MD  
 Teresa Theophano, LCSW  
 Alexandra Webb, LCSW  
 Geordana Weber, LCSW  
 Sandra Agredo, LCSW  
 Claudia Alcantara  
 David Ariza  
 Lina Avalo  
 Mitchell Butin, MD  
 Jennifer Campbell, LMSW  
 Stephanie Carrasquillo  
 Wayne Carrion, LCSW  
 Marissa Cross, LMSW  
 Caitlin Downing, LMSW  
 Victoria Gambino  
 Alana Glanell, LMSW  
 Wendy Golub, LCSW  
 Kathleen Harris, LCSW

Chief Executive Officer  
 Chief Administrative Officer  
 Chief Financial Officer  
 Chief Development Officer  
 Chief Program Officer  
 Senior VP for Intake and Admissions  
 Senior VP for PROS  
 Medical Director  
 Senior VP for Community Programs  
 Senior VP for Training & Initiatives  
 Senior VP for Clinical Services  
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Executive Manager  
 IT Junior Tech  
 Intake Navigator/MSW intern  
 Psychiatrist  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Intake Specialist  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker  
 STRIVE Social Worker  
 Intake Specialist  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Assistant Director, Community Programs

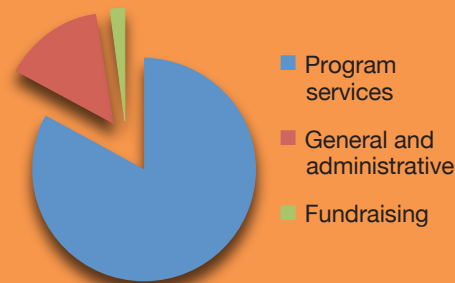
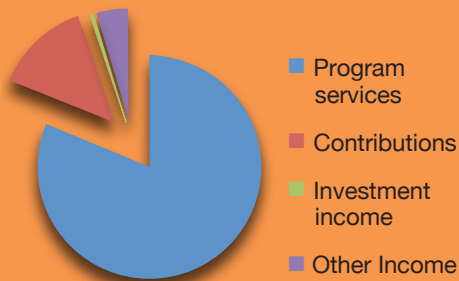
Ruderliza Hernandez  
 James Herrmann, LMSW  
 Linda Jamison  
 Aaron Kay, LMSW  
 Richard Laudor  
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 Sarah McConkey, LCSW  
 Cristina Mocellin, LCSW  
 Nydawattie Nanjad, LCSW  
 Anna Pardoe, MA  
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 Philip Paul, LCSW  
 Kadijah Peguero, LMSW  
 Joanne Perez  
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 Milvio Perez  
 Jajaira Phillips  
 Marc Raybin, LCSW  
 Norma Rodriguez  
 Anet Ruperto, LCSW  
 Frank Sivilli, LMSW  
 Lauren Taylor, LCSW  
 Elizabeth Torres  
 Ewelina Turlik, NPP  
 Doris Urrea, LCSW  
 Cindy Williams, LMSW

Assistant Director of Administration  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Recovery & Vocational Specialist  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Peer Specialist  
 Training Coordinator  
 Senior Social Worker  
 Bilingual Case Opener  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Recovery Specialist  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Clinic Operations Coordinator  
 Bilingual Receptionist  
 Maintenance and Housekeeping  
 Bilingual Rehab Aide  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Administrative Specialist  
 Bilingual Senior Social Worker  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Executive Assistant  
 Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner  
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker  
 Psychiatric Social Worker



# Financial

Year Ended June 30, 2024



## REVENUE

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Program services                 | \$5,392,235      |
| Contributions                    | \$728,828        |
| Investment income                | \$149,111        |
| Interest income                  | \$37,134         |
| Other income                     | \$248,554        |
| <b>Total revenue and support</b> | <b>\$248,554</b> |

## EXPENSES

|                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Program services                     | \$5,292,771        |
| General and administrative           | \$886,351          |
| Fundraising                          | \$99,062           |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                | <b>\$6,278,184</b> |
| <b>Net assets, beginning of year</b> | <b>\$5,130,804</b> |
| <b>Net assets, end of year</b>       | <b>\$5,408,482</b> |

A complete copy of the audited financial statement for Service Program for Older People, Inc. may be obtained by writing to SPOP, 302 West 91 Street, New York, NY 10024 or the NYS Dept. of State, 41 State Street, Albany, NY 12231.

Credits Editor | Janet Rosenberg Design | Annette Geyer-Leverington  
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## Offices & Clinic Satellite Sites

SPOP Main Office, Clinic, and Bereavement Support  
302 West 91st Street, New York, NY 10024

SPOP PROS/Personalized Recovery Oriented Services  
188 West 88th Street, New York, NY 10024

### Clinic Satellite Sites:

#### EAST HARLEM

- Leonard Covello Senior Center, 312 East 109th Street

#### LOWER EAST SIDE/CHINATOWN

- Manny Cantor Center, 197 East Broadway
- Mott Street Senior Center, 180 Mott Street

#### EAST VILLAGE

- Sirovich Senior Center, 331 East 12th Street

#### YORKVILLE/UPPER EAST SIDE

- Carter Burden Network, 415 East 74rd Street
- Isaacs Center, 415 East 93rd Street
- James Lenox House, 49 East 73rd Street
- Lenox Hill 415 East 74rd Street, 343 East 70th Street

#### ROOSEVELT ISLAND

- Carter Burden Roosevelt Island Senior Center, 546 Main Street

#### MIDTOWN/CHELSEA

- The Edie Windsor SAGE Center, 305 Seventh Avenue
- Encore Community Services, 239 West 49th Street
- Project FIND/Woodstock Neighborhood Senior Center, 127 West 43rd Street
- VISIONS at Selis Manor Senior Center, 135 West 23rd Street

#### UPPER WEST SIDE

- Project FIND Hamilton House, 141 West 73rd Street
- Red Oak Senior Center, 135 West 106th Street

#### WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

- Riverstone Senior Center, 99 Fort Washington Avenue

#### BROOKLYN

- Heights and Hills, 81 Willoughby Street
- GRIOT Circle, 25 Flatbush Avenue

#### BRONX

- SAGE Center Bronx, 1784 Prospect Avenue