

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



FAMILIES FORWARD
C H A R L O T T E



Our Mission

We partner with Charlotte area families experiencing poverty to achieve lasting economic stability. We provide educational opportunities, offer essential support, and foster long-term relationships through individualized mentoring.

Our Vision

Our vision is to empower Charlotte area families to overcome intergenerational poverty.

Our goal is to build relationships and give Charlotte's low-income families the tools and resources necessary to achieve long-term stability, effectively changing the landscape of poverty in Charlotte for generations to come.



Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been one of tremendous growth and collaboration for Families Forward Charlotte (FFC), as we have expanded our reach to work with over 90 families in our Family Success Program. Our impact is fueled by both the hard work of the families we partner with and the generous support from our community, and I am excited to share these successes with you in this year's Annual Report.



In addition to partnering with more families, we forged new partnerships that enhance our ability to provide meaningful support. These partnerships bring fresh perspectives, new resources, and a broader network of support, allowing us to better equip families as they work toward their goals of stability and self-sufficiency. Through these alliances, we've been able to address unique family needs with greater thoughtfulness and comprehensive care. Our work this year underscores the power of collaboration in making positive, lasting change.

Yet, even as we celebrate these achievements, we are reminded daily of the barriers many families continue to face. The journey to stability is far from easy, and the challenges brought on by rising costs, limited access to resources, and systemic inequities persist. But each success—every job secured, every new step toward financial independence—reaffirms the strength and resilience of our families, as well as the effectiveness of our approach.

Looking forward, we remain steadfast in our mission to empower families to achieve economic mobility and stability. We envision a community where every family has the support needed to thrive, and thanks to your unwavering commitment, we are one step closer to that future.

On behalf of the entire staff and Board of Directors, thank you for standing beside us. Your belief in our mission drives us forward, and we are immensely grateful to have you as partners in this work. With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carrie Christian'.

Carrie Christian
Executive Director and Founder

The Big Picture - Charlotte, NC

In Charlotte, NC, families with children face severe economic challenges that threaten their stability and well-being. Rising housing costs, paired with stagnant wages, have left many households unable to afford basic necessities. As a result, thousands of children are growing up in poverty, and hundreds of families are without stable housing. The persistent gap between income and the cost of living places an urgent need on the community to support these families, ensuring they have access to safe housing, economic opportunities, and resources that can break the cycle of poverty and promote long-term stability.



Childhood Poverty

32,713 children are living in poverty

censusreporter.org



Median Rent

Up \$436/month since 2020 to \$1,986

wbtc.com, Feb. 23, 2024



Minimum Wage

Has not moved from \$7.25 in North Carolina since 2008

labor.nc.gov



Housing Insecure

291 households with minor children (975 people) experiencing homelessness

mecklenburghousingdata.org



Our Programs

Family Success Program

Volunteer mentors (Family Liaisons) trained in Mobility Mentoring® support their Family Partner in creating and achieving goals toward long-term stability.

Educational workshops are held monthly to provide tools and resources to help families achieve their goals.

Essential support is provided through cleaning supplies, toiletries, Holiday meals and gifts, school supplies, and \$1,000 in financial assistance.

Alumni Program

Family Success Program graduates can remain engaged in on-going educational opportunities and give back by volunteering with FFC. Participants have the opportunity to earn funds through participation that supports their financial goals.

STEPS Program

We cover the cost of living for Family Success Program graduates so they can return to school to complete their High School Diploma and post-secondary education.

Weekend Food Pack Program

We coordinate, raise funds, collect donations, and provide volunteers to prepare food bags for children and families in food-insecure households. Each bag provides a child with food over weekends and holidays when they lack access to free breakfast and lunch at their school.





A Path To Economic Mobility

Onboarding

A volunteer Family Liaison is recruited and completes Mobility Mentoring® training, while a Family Partner is referred from a partner and is interviewed to determine their readiness for the program.



Orientation

The Family Liaison & Family Partner attend orientation. Together, they complete a Bridge to Self-Sufficiency® assessment and set a goal..

Mobility Mentoring

The Family Liaison & Family Partner continue monthly face-to-face meetings and weekly touch bases, focusing on goal achievement and resource connections.

Workshops are held monthly to provide skills and resources as Family Partners work towards goals.



Assistance

As financial barriers arise, Family Partners work with their Liaison to request financial assistance .

This can be used for rent, utilities, childcare, transportation, education, emergency food assistance, and other needs to ensure families can continue to focus on their goals.

Graduation

After two years, Family Partners attend a graduation ceremony. As graduates, they can participate in our STEPS and/or Alumni Program to continue their work towards economic mobility.



Marcus' Success

“I am a different person because of this program. I am a better dad. I wish I could stay with this program for the rest of my life! Working with a Family Liaison made each task I needed to accomplish way more manageable...I wasn't alone and that was so helpful.”

Success looks different for every family that we partner with. Here is a testimony from our Family Partner, Marcus, regarding his recent successes:

My mother died in 2018. Before she died, my daughter Za'bria (now in 10th grade) was living with her full-time and I was living with them intermittently. After my mom passed, it became more and more difficult for us to find stable housing. Thankfully, my aunt agreed to let Za'bria stay with her and I stayed with different friends and family until I could find assistance. At Za'bria's school, I spoke with a social worker who referred me to Families Forward Charlotte. Within days I was talking with Tatiyana and was soon working with my Family Liaison, Linda.

I began the Family Success Program in June, 2023. When I look back now, I realize that I honestly didn't know what I could accomplish through this program. I do know I was tired - looking for jobs, trying to find housing, providing for my daughter - and the immediate support of Families Forward Charlotte allowed my daughter and me to take a breath, slow down and start working on our goals for the future. Linda worked with Za'bria on finding a job and getting her enrolled at a new school.

My goals were to find housing and a job. For each goal we set, there were lots of steps that required so many appointments, paperwork, phone calls, information gathering, and long bus rides. Linda was great at keeping me on task with each goal and with connecting me to the people and services I needed. Now, after being in the program for 10 months, I can say I have a job AND an apartment! God is good!

- Marcus

We sincerely appreciate Marcus sharing his story,



Strategic Partnerships Elevate Impact

Just like the families in our program, we know that we can't do it alone. The past year has been one of strategic growth—not only in the number of people we provided services to but also in expanding our connections within the Charlotte community. Through collaborative partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community leaders, we have been able to amplify our impact and reach. These partnerships allow us to offer more robust resources, such as employment opportunities, housing, financial education, and essential supplies, making a tangible difference for families on their path to economic mobility.

Here's how our strategic partners support our mission and deepen our impact:

- Local organizations provide essential services, including mental health resources, job training, and housing support allowing families to stabilize and focus on their goals.
- Churches and Corporate Partners contribute funding and in-kind donations, such as clothing, food, and school supplies, to meet immediate needs and lessen families' financial burdens. They also facilitate volunteer opportunities, building a network of mentorship and support that strengthens our community ties.
- Non-profits and individuals who are subject matter experts partner with us to support workshops and events, offering families knowledge and skills to thrive. This includes financial literacy, mental health topics, parenting skills, and healthy living topics that benefits generations.

By combining forces with partners who share our commitment to empowering families, we can leverage our strengths, create innovative solutions, and better address the complex challenges our families face. We are grateful for these alliances, which not only strengthen our organization but also contribute to a more resilient Charlotte.



"I would like to thank FFC and the generous donors that make it possible for me and my family to strive for more in life. I was truly lost before I got into this program. I now no longer just exist, I live. I know my worth, and I know it's ok to fall short and get back up. I am forever grateful to have this opportunity. From my family to yours, thank you."

- Lori, Family Partner

Our Success Is Yours!

Families Forward Charlotte relies on the hard work and dedication of volunteers who support our work in many ways. We are grateful for the time and energy spent by all volunteers and have highlighted some below.



We appreciate the volunteer support of groups that packed Weekend Food Packs like Target, Agia Elpis Philoptochos Society, Charlotte Country Day School, and Sardis Pres Youth Group.

The dedication of Family Liaison mentors is unmatched. They dedicate 4-6 hours a month to work with a family in our program for at least 1 year. Thank you to all 70+ Family Liaisons!



Thank you to the groups and individuals who prepare and serve meals at workshops like Dr. Ana Maria Temple, Sardis Presbyterian Church, and Danny and Tricia Bergum.

Special appreciation is extended to those who volunteer to work with the children in the families we work with, such as Sardis Presbyterian Church and the Junior League.





The Power Of Volunteers

Our volunteer Family Liaison mentors make our Family Success Program possible. The number of families we can support is directly dependent on the number of Family Liaisons we are able to recruit. These volunteers dedicate numerous hours each year providing support and guidance to their Family Partners as they work towards achieving long-term stability. Without volunteers, FFC wouldn't be able to fulfill its mission and we want to recognize their dedication and commitment to our organization.

The Federal value of a
volunteer hour is: \$33.49



94 individuals volunteered as
Family Liaisons during our 2023-
24 program year

Each individual contributed
approximately 5 hours per month



Total value of their volunteer time =
\$188,883.60

Forward Progress

Results from the 2023-24 Family Success Program

93 total families participated in our Family Success Program (FSP).

33 new Family Liaison Mentors (volunteers) trained. Each worked with their Family Partners for an average of 5 hours per month.

42 educational workshops were offered covering topics such as financial literacy, career readiness, parenting skills, mental health, first time home buying, and other life skills.

181 Essential Baskets of cleaning supplies and toiletries distributed.

231 book bags filled with school supplies given to local children.

2,225 holiday gifts provided to program families.

\$205,000 of direct support provided to program families including, but not limited to: housing needs, phone/internet, transportation, childcare, and emergency food assistance.



Forward Progress

Results from the 2023-24 Family Success Program



Participants accomplished targeted, obtainable goals toward long-term stability with **295 total goals** completed.

These include, but are not limited to:

31 participants obtained new jobs or got a promotion

13 families moved into stable housing

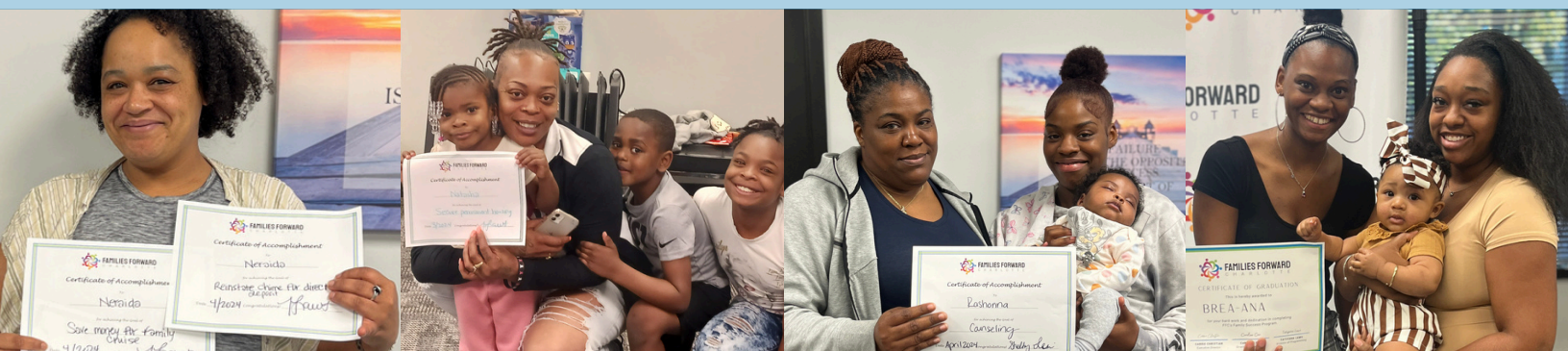
12 participants opened a savings account

18 participants paid off debt and/or improved their credit score

30 participants created budgets

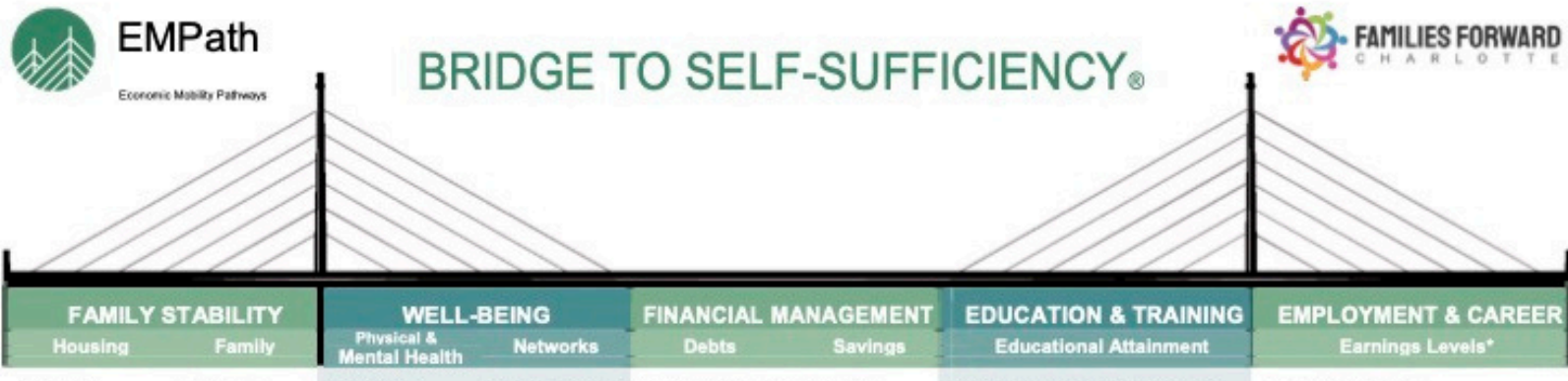
27 participants enrolled in or completed courses to advance their education (college courses, training programs, or certifications)

\$169,311 of direct financial support was provided to participants to help them meet their basic needs and to break through barriers to their success.

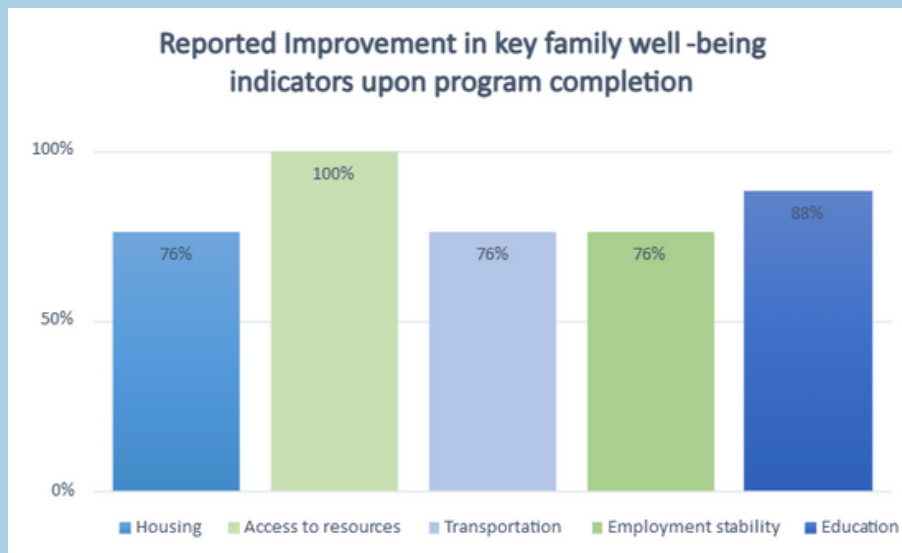


Forward Progress

Results from the 2023-24 Family Success Program



For all graduates who completed our End of Program Survey:
100% progressed forward on the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency assessment in at least one pillar, with an average +16.66 point change (on 100 pt. scale)



100% stated they feel more confident in themselves.

100% stated they benefited from their relationship with their Family Liaison mentor.

94% stated their need for clothes, furniture, and home goods improved.

88% stated their employment (or knowledge of opportunities) and/or employment training improved.

88% stated their ability to handle their finances (having a budget, knowledge of financial resources) improved.

88% stated their income (adequate for meeting basic needs) improved.

88% stated they feel like they have a better support system.

Forward Progress

Alumni Program

20 total families participated in our Alumni Program

\$7,308.84 of direct financial support provided to program families including, but not limited to: housing needs, phone/internet, transportation, childcare, and emergency food assistance.

Alumni events hosted in partnership with and supported by Family of Faith Christian Center

STEPS Program

5 total families participated in our STEPS Program

\$35,269.32 of direct support provided to program families including, but not limited to: housing needs, phone/internet, transportation, childcare, and emergency food assistance.

Weekend Food Pack Program

120 children impacted

2,400 bags of food provided to two Title 1 CMS Elementary Schools for food-insecure children.



Participants Become Leaders

We are pleased to introduce our inaugural
Alumni Association Board Members:

Elaine Brown - President

Erica Walker - Vice President

LaShawna Blake - Community Service Chair

Katrina Guiles - Secretary

Alumni of our Family Success Program nominated participants to hold office in the Alumni Association this spring. After the nominees campaigned and the group voted, the women listed above were sworn in and officially started their term.

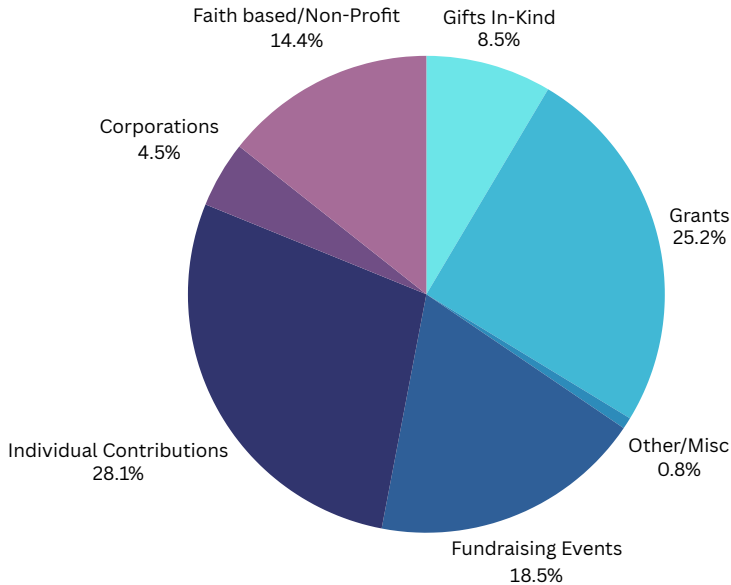
Together, they will plan meaningful activities and get-togethers for the Alumni of our Family Success Program, allowing them the opportunity to gather and continue supporting each other and FFC. Additionally, the President will serve on our FFC Board of Directors and the group will act in an advisory role to ensure we provide the best support possible to families in our community!



Financial Overview

Families Forward Charlotte engaged an accounting firm to perform our annual audit. These numbers have been pulled directly from the audited financial statements.

REVENUE PERCENTAGE BY TYPE FY2022



FY2024 REVENUE - \$1,324,806

\$333,598	Grants
\$372,855	Individual Contributions
\$245,317	Fundraising Events
\$190,127	Faith based/Partner
\$112,978	Gifts In-Kind
\$59,612	Corporate Sponsors
\$10,319	Other

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"This program is amazing. Very friendly and helpful. They have workshops that are very informative and easy to follow along with. Staff is awesome and down to earth. I've never met such an amazing group of individuals that understand and can relate to others because they've experienced the same obstacles in life as we have. So it makes it that much easier to open up and share things with them. They are regular people just like me. It's like having the friend you never had that you can talk to and ask their opinion on things." -Family Partner

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EXPENSE PERCENTAGE BY TYPE

73%	Program
20%	Fundraising
7%	Operating

EXPENSES - \$1,207,629

\$752,890	Family Success Program
\$55,209	STEPS Program
\$25,853	Alumni Program
\$248,948	Fundraising (mostly salary)
\$81,260	Management and General
\$42,140	Weekend Food Pack Program



"My family liaison was wonderful and very supportive, understanding and encouraging. He was always there and able to provide any information that would be beneficial for myself and my family."

-Family Partner

2023-24 Timeline

- July** *Volunteer Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
- August** *Four educational workshops
*Family Liaisons trained & new families joined our FSP
*Four educational workshops
*School supplies and Essential Baskets provided by community partners
- September** *Four educational workshops
*Fall graduation for FSP Families
- October** *Four educational workshops
- November** *Three educational workshops
*Thanksgiving meals & Essential Baskets provided by community partners
- December** *Holiday gifts, & meals distributed to families
*Hosted Family Resource Fair
- January** *Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
*Four educational workshops
*Winter graduation for FSP Families
- February** *Hearts for Hope fundraiser
*Two educational workshops
- March** *Four educational workshops
*Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
*Essential Baskets provided by community partners
- April** *Four educational workshops
*Anti-racism training held for staff, board members, & Family Liaisons
*Family Liaisons trained & new families joined our FSP
- May** *Four educational workshops
*Mother's Day Celebration
*Spring graduation for FSP Families
- June** *Annual Family Fun Day
*Alumni Swearing In Ceremony



Funder Recognition

We extend special thanks to the foundations and corporate partners who help make our mission possible. We are so grateful for your support in addressing economic mobility.

2023-24 GRANTS

A Resting Place Ministry
Albemarle Foundation
Atrium Health
Canopy Housing Opportunity Foundation
Christ Church Charlotte
City of Charlotte
Erie Insurance
Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation
Foundation For The Carolinas
Gene Haas Foundation
Junior League of Charlotte
LPL Financial Foundation
Lucille P & Edward C Giles Foundation
MileoneCares Fund
Providence Baptist Church
RSM US Foundation
Saint Mark Catholic Church
Saint Peter Catholic Church
Sardis Presbyterian Church

2023-24 GRANTS CONT.

Saint Peter Catholic Church
Sardis Presbyterian Church
Social Venture Partners (SVP)
Speedway Children's Charity
The Merancas Foundation INC
United Way of Central Carolinas
Wells Fargo Foundation

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Aprio
Bank of America
Burrow Welch & Culp
Charlotte Pediatric Dentistry
Coca-Cola Consolidated
Invest For Charlotte
NARENCO
Perry Ardell
SteelFab, Inc.
Truliant Federal Credit Union



Workshop Partners

The monthly educational workshops provided through our Family Success Program are presented in collaboration with wonderful community partners and other local nonprofits who serve as our subject matter experts on topics like financial literacy, parenting skills, first time home buying, career readiness, mental health, and setting boundaries. We want to recognize and thank these partners who provide invaluable knowledge and tools that our program families use in achieving their stability goals.

Arts+	Makeda Pennycooke
Bank Of America	Modern Legal
Dr. Ana Marie Temple	Park National Bank
Dr. Jeffrey Shears	Patrick Menefee
Dr. Tamara Davis-Jack	PNC Bank
Dream Key Partners	Promise Resource Network
Erica Walker	Sandra Jones
Fiercely Changing The Game	Sharonview Federal Credit Union
Jarett Evans with Revision Counseling	Teen Connection
Lee Zettlemoyer	Thompson Child and Family
Love Speaks Out	Women of Purpose





Staff

Carrie Christian, Executive Director

Caroline Cox, Director of Operations

Tatiyana Laws, Director of Programming

Daniel Bentley, Program Manager

Shelby Lewis, Program Manager

Becky Cathcart, Operations Manager

Hannah Kesig, Volunteer & Partnerships Coordinator

Board of Directors

Telitha Hight, Chair

Niki Koesel, Vice Chair

Jack Lange, Vice Chair in '23

Jason Reinfriend, Treasurer

Nadine Morgan, Secretary

Elaine Brown, At-Large

Deja Coney, At-Large ('23)

Dr. Carrie Graham, At-Large

Travluss Mickens, At-Large ('23)

David Privitera, At-Large

Stephanie Simpson, At-Large

Jazmin Hazbun, At-Large (23')

Rajan Merchant, At-Large (23')

Phil Toupin, At-Large

A Note From Our Board Chair

Our mission is clear: “We partner with families experiencing poverty to achieve lasting economic stability.” But the two most important words in this statement are “partner with.” At Families Forward Charlotte, we match families with dedicated volunteer liaisons who mentor them, helping them take meaningful steps toward achieving their goals.

Time and again, we hear from family partners and liaisons, even years after they’ve graduated from the program, that the bond they formed remains strong. Recently, a former liaison drove out of town to watch her family partner’s son play football. This family partner graduated from our program three years ago, yet their connection is so meaningful that she spent her evening cheering him on from the stands.

One family partner described her liaison as a “lifelong friend,” saying, “She did not focus on trying to ‘improve’ me; her intention was to forge a relationship and build upon it.” This is the heart of our work. We believe that these genuine, lasting relationships are what make the greatest impact in breaking the cycle of poverty in our city.

To our corporate and community partners and donors: thank you for making this work possible with your generous funding. To our partner organizations: thank you for working with our families to provide essential services. To our staff: thank you for your tireless dedication to supporting our families. And to our volunteer liaisons: you are the backbone of this organization. We couldn’t succeed without you!

Sincerely,
Telitha Hight
Board of Directors, President

Learn More

info@familiesforwardclt.org | (704) 659-1833

www.familiesforwardcharlotte.org

Facebook: [@familiesforwardcharlotte](https://www.facebook.com/familiesforwardcharlotte) | Instagram: [families_forward_charlotte](https://www.instagram.com/families_forward_charlotte)