

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



**FAMILIES FORWARD**  
C H A R L O T T E

# OUR MISSION

Families Forward Charlotte is a 501(c)(3) that partners with families living in poverty in Mecklenburg County, NC. We provide individualized mentoring, educational opportunities and essential support as we walk alongside each family on their journey toward long-term stability and economic mobility.

# OUR VISION

We envision our city's children and families living free of the challenges of poverty.

Our goal is that by building relationships and giving Charlotte's low-income families the tools and resources necessary to achieve long-term stability, we will change the landscape of poverty in Charlotte for generations to come.





Dear Friends of Families Forward Charlotte,

I am elated to share with you how Families Forward Charlotte has expanded services, programming, and became a sustainable organization, fighting the barriers of poverty, for families in our community. The families we serve continue to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we are determined to provide the mentorship, life-skills education, and essential support each needs in order to continue on a path towards economic stability.

This year, we solidified our place in the community as we became a more recognized and legitimized organization by hitting some key targets we set out to accomplish. We exceeded our goal to serve 50 families (with 61 total families served) in the 2020-21 Family Success Program, only made possible by the dedicated volunteers and the financial support of our Charlotte community. We also hit a milestone of serving 100 families total since the founding of our organization in 2017! The staff we hired to manage our programming also brought significant value to Families Forward Charlotte, enabling us to continue to expand, start new programs, and better engage community partners for the families we serve.

We have continued to foster relationships through volunteer Family Liaisons mentors, build life-skills through workshops and remove barriers with essential support in the form of baskets of toiletries and home goods, holiday gifts and meal support, and fulfillment of the various essential needs of our program participants. In the Spring of 2021, we started thinking about what more we could do to increase the economic mobility of the families we serve and started planning for our Alumni Program and STEPS Program that officially kicked off this summer. Through both of these programs, we can bolster the success that began in our Family Success Program.

Our goal remains that by building relationships and giving Charlotte's low-income families the tools and resources necessary to achieve long-term stability, we will change the landscape of poverty in Charlotte for generations to come. We continue to be grateful for the support of our community, our sustainers, our partners, and everyone that has had a hand in making FFC a well-established and impactful community figure. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for your continued faith in us and for your support of our organization.

Sincerely,

Carrie Christian  
Executive Director and Founder

# OUR PROGRAMS

## FAMILY SUCCESS PROGRAM

Volunteer mentors (Family Liaisons) trained in Mobility Mentoring support their family partner in creating and achieving goals towards long-term stability.

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

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

## 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.



# KISSHA'S SUCCESS

When Kissha joined our Family Success Program, she was living out of her car and bouncing around on friends' couches while her children stayed with family in a small home. Kissha was unemployed but knew that finding a stable job was one of her top priorities.

Kissha began working with her Family Liaison mentor to update her resume and prepare for job interviews. Kissha attended our educational workshop on "Career Readiness" presented by Winston & Strawn, LLP. She had been working towards her goal of finding a work-from-home job in the technology field. Her enthusiasm for the information and tips they shared on resume building and interview skills showed through- she asked insightful questions and joined in on discussions.

Shortly following the workshop, we got the exciting news that Kissha got a work-from-home job in technology! Once employed, our staff helped her find and secure a rental home. Kissha, her children, and grandchild had moved in with family while she was attempting to work from home full-time, which was increasingly difficult. After months of searching with the help of her Liaison, Kissha was approved for her own rental home! Our nonprofit partner, Furnish For Good, helped provide all the necessary furnishings and home goods for their new home.

Throughout all the progress Kissha was experiencing, she still had to deal with a major setback: her car broke down, leaving her family without any transportation. Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to give her family a vehicle. We are passionate about fulfilling needs like this to have a transformational impact on families' lives, which it did for Kissha's family.

Kissha continues to set and accomplish goals like improving her mental health so she can be the best possible mom to her children.



"I wouldn't have been ready for this without Families Forward's assistance! I'm not saying I wouldn't have excelled, but this program most definitely showed me that I have a reason to live and that there are people out there who really care! Thank you! I am forever grateful."  
- Kissha

# Forward PROGRESS

Results from the 2021 Family Success Program graduating co-hort

**100%** progressed forward on the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency assessment in at least one pillar, with an average +14 point change (out of 100), an increase of +6 points from 2019-2020.

**62%** accomplish targeted, obtainable goals towards long-term stability:

- 11 obtained new jobs/went back to work
- 8 moved into rental homes from living in hotels, shelters, or doubled up
- 7 established savings and/or increased their credit score
- 7 enrolled in a GED program or college
- 4 now own their own vehicles to get to and from work and/or school
- 3 secured childcare so they could work

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*Survey responses from 75% of 2021 graduating participants:*

**100%** benefited from their relationship with their Family Liaison

**100%** felt more confident in themselves

**100%** reported improved access to or knowledge of educational opportunities

**92%** felt like they had a better support system

**92%** could better handle finances (budgeting, knowledge of resources)

**92%** reported an improved housing situation (stable, condition of the home, up to date on rent/mortgage)

**67%** reported more stable employment

**67%** reported improved income (adequate for meeting basic needs)



# Forward PROGRESS

Results from all families served

- 61** total families served in 2020-21 Family Success Program (FSP).
- 53** Family Liaison Mentors (volunteers) trained. Each worked with their family partners for an average of 5 hours per month.
- 34** Educational workshops offered covering topics such as financial literacy, career readiness, parenting skills, mental health, first time home buying, and other life skills.
- \$175K+** of direct support provided to program families including, but not limited to: housing needs, phone/internet, transportation, childcare, and emergency food assistance.
- 150** essential baskets of cleaning supplies and toiletries distributed.
- 245** school supply kits given to local children.
- 1,731** Holiday gifts provided to program families.

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## WEEKEND FOOD PACK PROGRAM

- \$8K+** of food support provided to two Title 1 Elementary Schools for food-insecure children. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, children/families received a combination of snacks, meals, and grocery gift cards.



# MARIA'S SUCCESS

"I will be one of your success stories, I will do everything," was one of the first things Maria said to our staff when we met her in August 2020, and she has truly lived up to that promise! At the time, Maria was homeless and living in her car with her two daughters. We immediately placed Maria in a hotel so her family had a safe place to sleep and internet access for virtual school.

Maria was determined to improve her situation. She worked with her Family Liaison mentors, Kevin and Elise, to set a goal of applying to three housing programs and completed the applications immediately. She also quickly found part-time jobs to get her on the path to stability, even with the difficult task of managing childcare and virtual learning.

Maria's diligence paid off and she was accepted into an affordable housing complex. With stable housing secured, Maria then turned her focus towards advancing her education and finished getting her GED in June 2021! She is now working on a post-secondary degree.

Maria was able to get a job as an in-home caregiver, which provided a steady income and made her proud. Maria really enjoyed her new job and the ability to provide for her family but struggled to maintain transportation to and from work, as her car kept breaking down. At the risk of losing her full-time job, she saved enough to pay off her DMV fees and we provided a donated vehicle to her family, solving the last piece to her puzzle in achieving stability she had worked so hard to gain.

Community support allows us to support families like Maria's and provide the necessary resources to change the landscape of poverty.



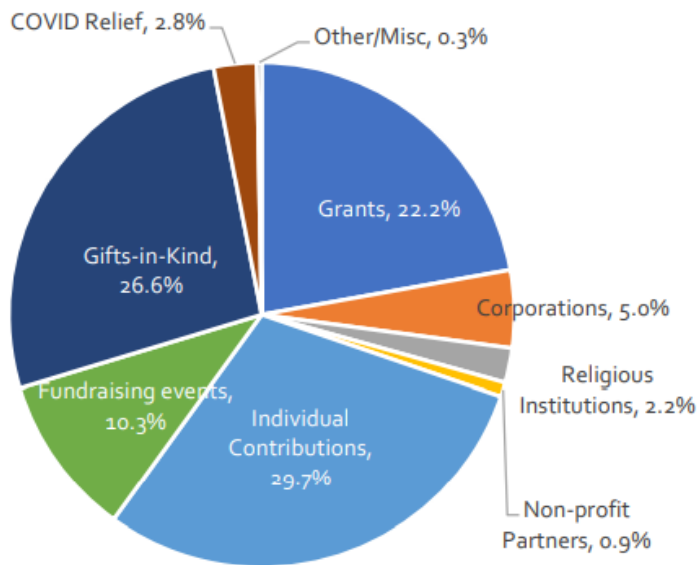
"My family and I are so blessed to have wonderful and caring people in our lives like you. Thank you is not enough. We have so much because of the help, guidance, wisdom, advice, love, understanding, and trust you all have shown and given us."

- Maria

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Families Forward Charlotte made a concerted effort to diversify funding sources for the stability of the organization.

## REVENUE PERCENTAGE BY TYPE



“If it weren't for Families Forward Charlotte and helping partners, my son & I would be homeless & carless. I can't thank everyone enough for all the help & support, kindness & generosity they've shown! I am truly grateful and blessed.  
- Kimberley”

## EXPENSE PERCENTAGE BY TYPE

79% Program  
12% Fundraising  
8% Operating

## FY2021 REVENUE - \$543,233 TOTAL

\$161,461	Individual Contributions
\$147,358	Grants
\$144,693	Gifts In-Kind
\$56,219	Fundraising Events
\$26,993	Corporate Sponsors
\$6509	Other

## EXPENSES - \$446,889

\$348,151	Family Success Program
\$54,513	Fundraising
\$36,103	Management and General
\$8122	Weekend Food Pack Program



"I truly enjoyed that workshop last night. To know that I have an opportunity to accomplish one of my life goals has me overwhelmed with joy. I am grateful and I truly appreciate the program. I feel like it was heaven sent."  
- Akiva

# FUNDER RECOGNITION

We would like to give a special thanks to the community and corporate partners who help make our mission possible. We are so grateful for your support in addressing economic mobility for Charlotte's low-income families.

## CORPORATE PARTNERS

Carolina CAT  
Coca-Cola Consolidated  
Ironhead Construction  
NARENCO  
Sharonview Federal Credit Union  
Southminster  
Truliant Federal Credit Union  
Winston & Strawn LLP

## 2020-21 GRANTS

A Resting Place Ministries  
Albemarle Foundation  
Canopy Housing Foundation  
Foundation for the Carolinas, Family Stability  
International Paper  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
Providence Baptist Church  
Sardis Presbyterian Church  
Sisters of Mercy Foundation  
Social Venture Partners  
Truliant Charitable Contributions  
United Way & Foundation for the Carolinas,  
COVID Relief Fund



# COVID-19 RELIEF

Families in our Family Success Program were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shut down experienced in 2020. At the onset of the pandemic, 23 of the 27 families in our program at the time either lost employment, had hours significantly cut or lost their childcare and therefore could not work.

Between our amazing community and a special United Way & Foundation for the Carolinas's grant, we raised **\$65,000 in COVID-Relief** funding to support FSP families during this difficult time.

Funding provided:  
**\$33,700** in housing support  
**\$10,700** in utilities support  
**\$9,100** in transportation support  
**\$7,800** in food support  
**\$3,700** in other emergency needs

# 2020-21 TIMELINE

<b>July 2020</b>	Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
<b>August</b>	30 volunteer Family Liaisons trained & 25 new families joined our FSP
<b>September</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>September</b>	School supplies and Essential Baskets provided to 40 families
<b>October</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>November</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>November</b>	Thanksgiving meals provided by community partners
<b>December</b>	Holiday gifts, Holiday meals, and Essential Baskets distributed to 50 families
<b>January 2021</b>	Executive Director and Program Manager join as full-time staff
<b>January</b>	Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
<b>January</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>January</b>	11 volunteer Family Liaisons trained & 11 new families joined our FSP
<b>February</b>	Hearts for Hope fundraiser raised over \$60,000
<b>February</b>	Six virtual educational workshops
<b>March</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>March</b>	Essential Baskets distributed to 60 families
<b>April</b>	Four virtual educational workshops
<b>April</b>	Anti-racism training for staff, board members, and Family Liaisons
<b>April</b>	Family Liaison recruitment & new family interviews
<b>May</b>	11 volunteer Family Liaisons trained & 11 new families joined our FSP
<b>May</b>	Five virtual educational workshops
<b>June</b>	Three virtual educational workshops
<b>June</b>	Graduation ceremony held for 16 families



## A Note From Our Board Chair



## STAFF

Carrie Christian, Executive Director  
Caroline Cox, Director of Operations  
Antonique Jones, Program Manager  
Tatiana Laws, Program Manager  
Becky Cathcart, Administrative Specialist

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Telitha Hight, President  
Jack Lange, Vice President  
Ursula Felder, Secretary  
Andy Krafft, Treasurer  
Deatrice Lockhart, At-Large  
Crystal Meggett-Huntley, At-Large  
Lucas Fisher, At-Large  
Kirsten Burney, At-Large  
Niki Koesel, At-Large  
Travlus Mickens, At-Large  
Holly Huffman, At-Large  
Mandy Idol, At-Large  
Tracey Atkinson, At-Large

When I look back at all that Families Forward Charlotte has accomplished since we started just over 4 years ago, I'm truly amazed. Carrie created this organization as a result of her love of this city and the desire to genuinely help others. In that time, we have assisted over 100 families with everything from rental deposits, car repairs, holiday gifts, food, and so much more. In addition to the financial assistance that families have received, many of them have formed long-term bonds with their Family Liaisons. This was what Carrie envisioned four years ago and is one of our greatest accomplishments. Those lasting friendships cannot be measured on paper or captured in a statistic but definitely have a real impact on the lives of those family members.

We will create our next 3-year strategic plan in early 2022 and I have no doubt that it will include huge goals that may keep me up some nights. I'm confident that whatever goals we create, with the continued support of this community, we will not only meet them but exceed them.

I'm so fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the amazing FFC staff and board and I look forward to all the new successes that our families and Liaisons have next year!

Sincerely,

Telitha Hight  
Board of Directors, President

## LEARN MORE

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