



YOUTH FOCUS

Saving Lives

2024 Annual Report

From the Board of Directors



When we witness a life-threatening situation, our first reaction is to call 911 so the first responders can be urgently dispatched. We wait breathlessly for them to arrive and change the outcome of the tragedy unfolding in front of us. This becomes all the more heightened when lives are on the line.

There is a crisis happening right now in our community, but it is not one that is easily seen. There are over 2,000 youth experiencing homelessness here in Guilford County and it is a life-threatening situation for many of them. Without the help of first responders and services to follow, their lives are at risk. This is the driving force behind what we do at Youth Focus. And you are an important part of this response.

As you turn the pages of this year's annual report, you'll see more than charts and statistics. You'll see stories of lives saved, futures restored and hope renewed. **Paige's story below is just one example.** When you see program numbers, remember this includes:



A mother and her child saved from domestic violence,
A teen rescued from human trafficking,
A young person no longer contemplating suicide because hope has been restored.

This past year you gave time. You gave resources. You gave hope. And YOU have saved lives.

But perhaps most powerfully, you reminded us that saving lives isn't only about safe shelter or basic needs—it's about connection. About showing up. About refusing to look away. Thank you for doing all these things. As we look ahead, we're more committed than ever to this mission. And we know with your continued partnership, every life saved is a new story begun.

With deepest appreciation,

Stacy L. James

Stacy James,
Board Chair

Sarah Roethlinger

Sarah Roethlinger,
Executive Director



Watch Paige's Story



<https://bit.ly/PaigeAT>



2023-2024

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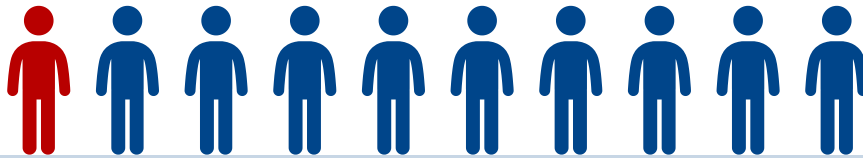
Dr. Latoya Chevelle Waddell
East Carolina University

Dr. Carey Williams
Carolina Pediatrics
of the Triad



Youth experiencing homelessness are not safe on our streets.

One in 10 young people **ages 10-25** experience homelessness over a 12-month period.



Impact of Homelessness



Young people experiencing homelessness face higher rates of alcohol and drug use. For many, substance use offers a means of escape from the physical and emotional trauma associated with life on the streets. About 10% of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime, yet 29% of youth experiencing homelessness report having substance use problems.



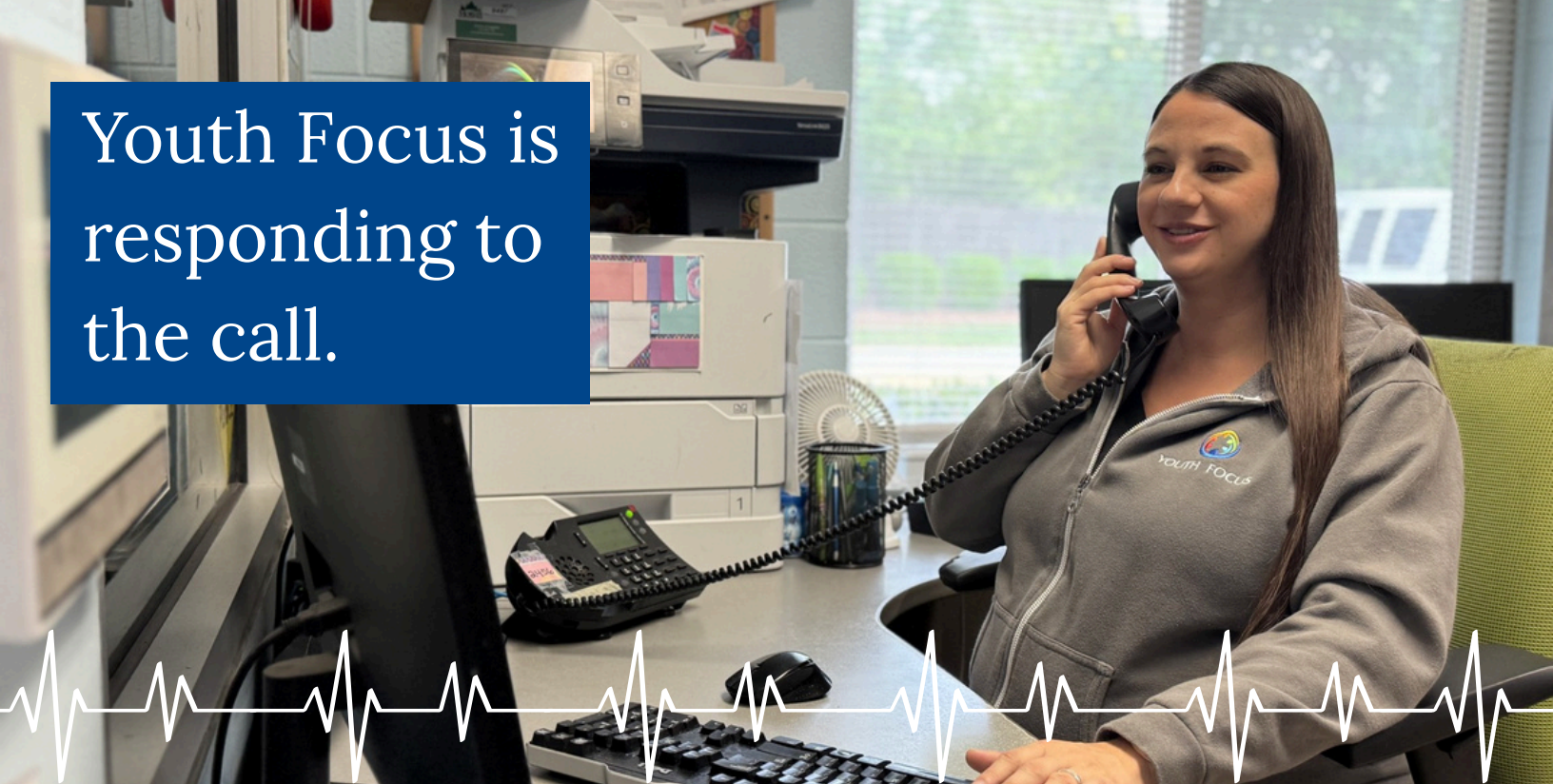
Homelessness causes disruptions in education, making it harder to graduate and escape the cycle of poverty.



Youth who experience homelessness have significantly higher rates of emotional, behavioral, and immediate and long-term health issues. In fact, 69% of youth experiencing homelessness report mental health challenges.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for unaccompanied youth without shelter.

Youth Focus is responding to the call.



Programs, Numbers Served, & Impact

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



Race

50% African American
35% Caucasian
14% Multiracial
1% Pacific Islander

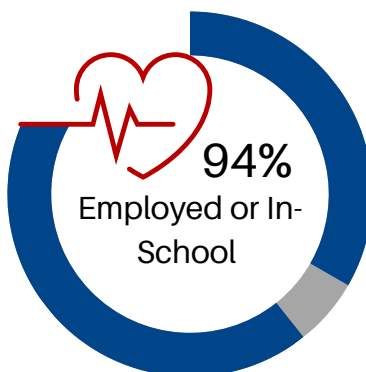
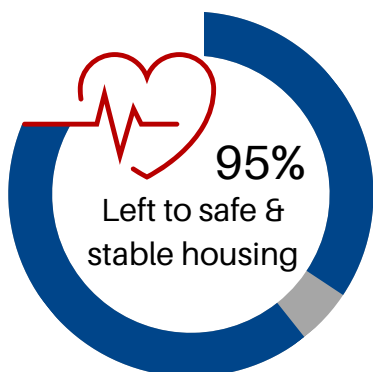
Gender

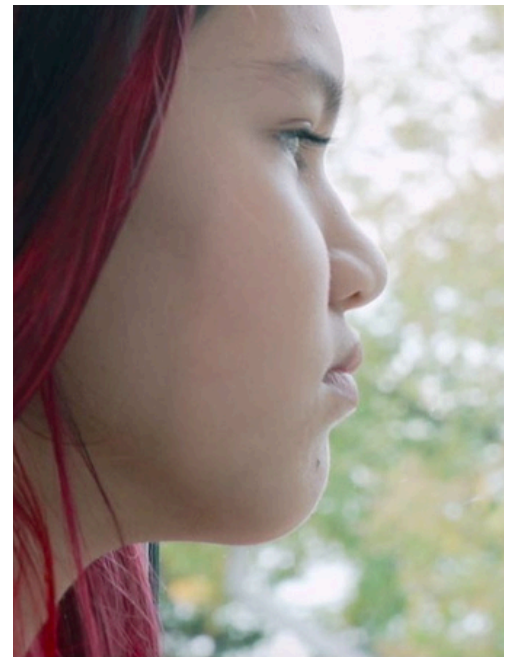
54% Female
44% Male
1% Trans
1% Nonbinary

Ethnicity

89% Non-Hispanic
11% Hispanic

18% **LGBTQ+**





youth escaped
danger and
reached safety



youth accessed
safe shelter
during crisis



youth accessed
mental health
supports

Safe Place

When teens find themselves in crisis or need a place to stay, they should know how and where to get help. Youth Focus runs the Safe Place program for Guilford, Alamance, Randolph, and Davidson counties. Safe Place provides access to immediate help and resources for youth in need. Safe Place locations are easily recognized by their vibrant yellow signs.

Act Together

Act Together is an emergency shelter for male, female, and gender nonconforming youth ages 11 to 17 who have run away, are experiencing a family crisis, are the victims of abuse or neglect, or are experiencing homelessness for other reasons. Referrals can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Act Together provides temporary shelter while a youth's needs are assessed and wrap around services are initiated.

Safe Haven

Safe Haven provides free mental health counseling and other supports for youth ages 11 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness. This program ensures all youth residing in Youth Focus programs have seamless access to **trauma-informed** outpatient counseling as well as peer support services, enhanced case management, assistance with obtaining mainstream benefits, and more.



152
Referred



134
Referred



youth entered
adulthood with
independence



youth & kids
established a
permanent home



moms & babies
thrived in a
safe, stable home

HEARTH

Transitional Living Program

Similar to dormitory-style housing, youth ages 18-21 share two-bedroom apartments leased by Youth Focus. The apartments are in close proximity to each other with one apartment serving as a staff office to ensure on-site support.

This program allows youth some degree of independence while still having staff support in close proximity as they learn and practice independent living skills. Youth can stay in the program for 18 months.

HEARTH

Beyond

Rental assistance for up to two years for youth ages 18-24 to maintain a lease in their own name with locations throughout Guilford County. Youth Focus staff provide support services to help them achieve educational & professional goals so they can maintain long-term stability and success in their own home.

My Sister Susan's House

Home for pregnant or parenting youth ages 16-21 where moms achieve independent living skills and gain parenting knowledge so they can provide the best possible home for their child after leaving the program. Located near A&T University, the program can house up to 4 moms at a time along with their dependent child and they can stay up to 18 months.

Safe Places, Bright Futures

As a 17-year-old high school student, Saykritt looked like your average high schooler on the surface. In the midst of school assignments and long days at Dudley High School, she also found time for things she enjoys: singing, drawing, recording TikTok dances, and styling hair. However, if you could glimpse beneath the surface, you would see she was dealing with more than your average high school student faces at home.

Residing at her biological father's home, Saykritt lived with a heavy load. Her father was physically and verbally abusive and it took a toll on her mental health. Saykritt felt she needed to make a change even though there weren't many good options of places to go. She ended up couch-surfing for a time, staying with a friend during the week who lived close to school. On weekends, she moved from place to place so as not to wear out her welcome. Eventually she was asked to leave.

She needed to make a change and ended up couch-surfing.

Her only option was to move in with her mom. Saykritt's mom is bipolar and schizophrenic. Because of her mom's mental health, the home was filled with chaos. Her mom would cycle from one mental health crisis to another. During those times, she was highly reactive which created more conflict, and she wasn't able to provide proper supervision for the children. As a result, the kids

experienced both verbal abuse and neglect at times. The other issue in the home was the lack of proper medication management for Saykritt's brother. These medications were important to maintain his own emotional stability. Saykritt explains that he was "out of control when he stopped taking his medicine," and it would take calling the police to get him to calm down. Because of these repeated incidents, the Department of Social Services was notified. After an investigation, they determined the kids should not remain in the home.

**For youth in our community who aren't safe in their home,
Act Together Crisis Care is a place where they can find
safe shelter and support in times of crisis.**

Act Together is also a place where they can be wrapped in a wide range of resources. For Saykritt, this meant a safe place to live while the Department of Social Services did a proper assessment of the situation and located a suitable longer-term placement. Finding a foster placement for a 17-year-old youth who was about to turn 18 is difficult. She needed stability and emotional support—two things she had not had in a long, long time.





When Saykritt came to Act Together, she was scared and upset, crying the entire car ride with her caseworker. When she walked into the doors, she was greeted by the Act Together staff with compassion and understanding. Saykritt was particularly appreciative for two of the counselors at Act Together: Ms. Sherry and Ms. Jana. Ms. Sherry was already familiar to her through community connections outside of the shelter. Ms. Sherry “feels like a second mama to me.” And Saykritt connected with Ms. Jana in a special way, explaining that “She told me about herself, and she was very relatable. She really empowered me with her story, she made me want to try and to be better.” For the first time in a long time, Saykritt felt safe. She could count on regular meals. She wasn’t surrounded by conflict and chaos. And as she felt safe, she could open up and let herself enjoy being a teen again.

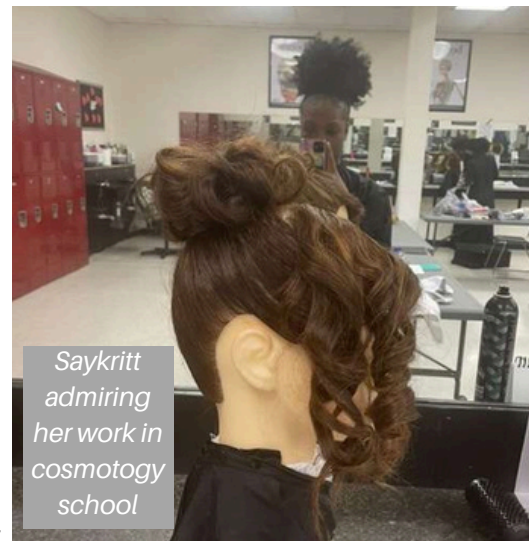
While at Act Together, she enjoyed outings such as skating, going out for food, as well as connecting with her peers as they opened up to one another. Saykritt still talks to many of them today and considers them lifelong friends.

Unfortunately, Act Together can only provide temporary shelter. And because Saykritt was not yet 18, she was not eligible to move into Youth Focus’ HEARTH Transitional Living Program. Her DSS caseworker helped connect Saykritt to an independent living program.

While not the ideal fit, it did provide what she needed in the moment to accomplish her immediate goals. The most important was graduating from high school! She officially graduated in December 2024 and will be walking in June. Since graduating in December, she has secured full time employment and is enrolled in cosmetology school.

Saykritt’s time at Act Together came at a crucial turning point in her life. Looking back, she knows she needed to get out of the living situation she was in because it wasn’t safe. Act Together was a place that gave her the space, time, and support she needed to figure out what she wanted for her future and how she was going to get there. It allowed her to remain consistent in her schoolwork so she could graduate early. It gave her the stability she needed to remember and draw on her strengths, especially her faith and belief in God. Saykritt shares that if she had not come to Youth Focus, “I feel like I would be struggling like I was before with my mom. It helped me to stay focused on what I really wanted to do. Youth Focus really helped me get through a lot.” When asked how her time at Youth Focus changed her outlook on the future, she quickly replied, “I feel like I always knew what I wanted to do, but I had a few setbacks. So, it helped me get to where I wanted to be instead of struggling every day.”

**“I felt safe there.
It helped me
mentally.”**



**“I would like to say thank you to everyone
at Act Together who helped me and
pushed me to being a better me.”**

Your Support Saves Lives



Vince Valitutti/ Metro Goldwyn Mayer Pictures

Sometimes rescue efforts capture the attention of the entire world. This was certainly true in June of 2018 while the world watched in real-time as hundreds of volunteers worked together over the course of 15 days to rescue 12 boys and their soccer coach who were trapped deep within a system of caves under a Thai mountain. You can watch the amazing story in Ron Howard's movie **"Thirteen Lives."**

The rescue effort involved as many as 10,000 people, including more than 100 divers, scores of rescue workers, representatives from about 100 governmental agencies, 900 police officers and 2,000 soldiers. On the periphery of the rescue efforts, an army of volunteers kept the operation running, cooking meals and washing clothes. Engineers worked to divert rainwater from the caves in order to bide time. The diverted waters flooded local rice fields, but many of the farmers told reporters that they were happy to make the sacrifice if it would help save the boys' lives.

All for THIRTEEN precious lives.

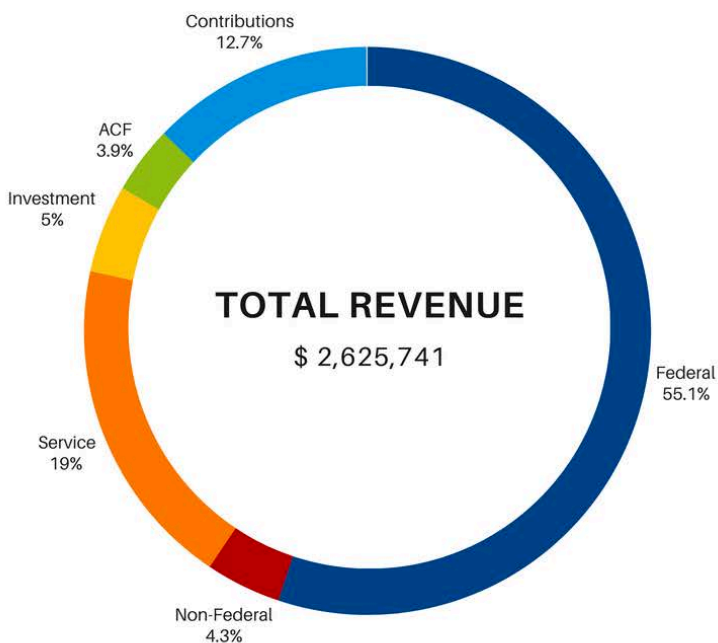
Here at Youth Focus, the collaboration between staff, volunteers, community partners, and donors may not draw world-wide attention. But it is JUST as impactful. Together, we are altering the course of the future

for almost TWO HUNDRED youth every year.

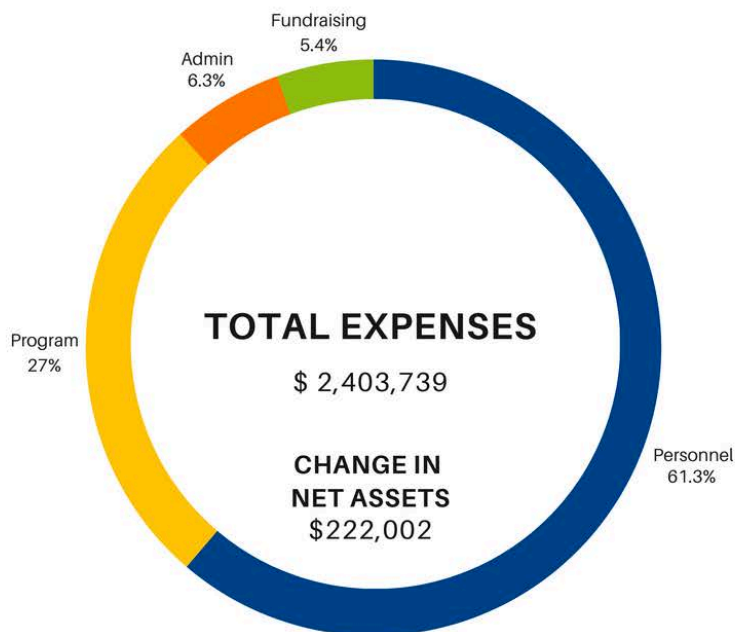
The cave rescue could not have happened without the collective effort of every person involved. No single entity could have done it alone. This is equally true for the work Youth Focus is doing to save lives and change futures for youth in our community. Our staff show up every day with compassion and expertise, giving sacrificially so kids can find hope and healing. But they cannot do it alone. Our donors ensure our programs can be run with excellence and provide needed local support to bring thousands of state and federal funds to our community. Our volunteers faithfully fill in all the gaps, multiplying our efforts and giving staff and youth alike the reassurance that they are not alone.

2024 Financial Overview

FEDERAL GRANTS
\$1,446,834
NON-FEDERAL GRANTS
\$112,871
SERVICE REVENUE (ROOM & BOARD)
\$498,143
INVESTMENT INCOME
\$131,616
ALEXANDER CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
\$101,116
CONTRIBUTIONS
\$333,322
OTHER
\$1,839



PERSONNEL COSTS
\$1,472,328
PROGRAM OPERATIONS
\$649,698
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE
\$150,797
FUNDRAISING
\$130,916



We could not do it without



The Youth Focus team,

our donors,

& our volunteers!

Giving at a Glance

2023-2024 Giving

Unrestricted	\$292,154
Restricted	\$ 80,969
Total	\$373,123

Donors

Current	109
New	181
Total	290

Sources of Giving

Individuals	\$153,582
Corporations/ Organizations	\$ 137,541
Foundations	\$ 32,000
United Way	\$ 50,000
Total	\$373,123

2024 Love Opens Doors



Community is Everything!

Thank you to everyone who helped make 2024 Love Opens Doors a huge success. We well exceeded our fundraising goal thanks to the generous support of everyone in our community: friends of the organization, our volunteers, and all the businesses who supported through sponsorship as well as in-kind donations.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

Champion



HONDA

Lomonaco Investments

Hero

HOOD HARGETT



MELISSA GREER
REALTOR / BROKER, GRI, CRS
Your home means everything to me.

Visionary



GREENSBORO
Housing & Neighborhood
Development



SMITH LEONARD
Accountants & Consultants

columbia
FOREST PRODUCTS™

WE MAKE CLEAN ENERGY HAPPEN®

OECHSLI

Role Model



Emerge Ortho



Lake Jeanette
ORTHODONTICS &
PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY
www.SmileGreensboro.com



Hoffman
Hydronics



Love Opens Doors photography
donated by Allison Hughey.

We ♥ our Volunteers

110 Volunteers

served in a variety of creative ways according to each group's unique abilities and interests. From game nights with the kids to cleaning out storage sheds, our volunteers made a huge difference for both our youth and our staff.

670 Hours

Our volunteers gave generously of their time this past year. The time they devoted to our programs equaled

\$19,400 of in-kind work



Ways to Get Involved

Volunteer



There are lots of different ways to volunteer. Just reach out to Maggie Cook at mcook@youthfocus.org to get signed up for the newsletter.

Tour



A Mission Tour is a great way to see Youth Focus up close and in action. Come learn more and then invite your friends to do the same!

Spread the Word



Help us grow our presence by introducing Youth Focus to others through social media, inviting us to speak, or hosting a tour.

Give



Your unrestricted gift towards general operating funds help us advance our mission of helping youth achieve safety, security, and success.



Multi-Year Giving Society

Youth Focus is profoundly grateful to our 2023-2024 Multi-Year Giving Society supporters, whose generous three-year commitment of at least \$1,000 annually helps ensure kids are surrounded with the supports they need to achieve safety, security, and success.

Circle of Life

\$30,000-\$74,999 Commitment

Diversified Electrical Technologies

Circle of Dreams

\$15,000-\$29,999 Commitment

Melissa Greer

Jeffrey & Shirley Vestal

Lomonaco Investments:

Jon & Laurie Ford, Brian Ford

Circle of Champions

\$6,000-\$14,999 Commitment

Sandy and Julie Buchanan

Dr. Carey and James Williams

Camino Law



Circle of Hope

\$3,000-\$5,999 Commitment

Gayla Bivens-Moss

Joseph and Anne Britt

Elizabeth Crutchfield

Charles Langdon and Sandy Fuller

Michelle Haaf

Christien Harden

Courtney Horton

City of Greensboro,

Housing & Neighborhood Development

Ken and Bobbie Huggins

Thomas Jones and Jay Brower

Erik and Dot Kimelman

Mary Lafar

Ben and Jennifer Lewis

Jennifer Love

Tanner and Eric Muse

Tjai and Sarah Nielsen

Christy Norrod

Donald Olson

Eoin O'Sullivan

Debbie Reynolds

Erik and Sarah Roethlinger

Summer and Kimberly Stewart

Glenn and Robin Wise

JD Logistix, Inc.

Corporate, Foundation, & Organization Support

The strength of the circle of support is strongest when all the aspects of our community link arms to surround youth. Through employee giving, matching funds, grants, and sponsorships, these organizations made a huge difference for our youth in 2023-2024.

Lanier Law Group
Mama Made It! Accessories
Crossroads: Pathways to Success, Inc.
Chase's Chance
Community Collaboration for Children, Inc
Crossfit Versatile
NAMI Guilford
Replacements Ltd.
IQVIA
Salon Midtown - A Kyle Britt Salon
TCJ & Associates
TE Connectivity
K. Redman Law, PLLC
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Crabtree Counseling & Consulting
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Greensboro Municipal FCU
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Pinnacle Contracting Services LLC
Sutton Bros, Inc.
SouthEnd Exteriors
JC Waller & Associates PC
Quality Packaging Corp
Smith Marketing



LT Apparel Group
Hoffman and Hoffman, Inc
Lake Jeanette Orthodontics &
Pediatric Dentistry
LJB Engineering
Renewal by Andersen of the Triad
Emerge Ortho
Oechsli
City of Greensboro
Camino Law
Bank of America
USA Dream Stone LLC
Smith Leonard
Starbucks Foundation
Williams
Diversified Electrical Technology
Garman Homes
Spectrum
Columbia Forest Products
Crowder Construction Company
Honda
Italian American Social Club
Pinnacle United Methodist Church
St Barnabas Episcopal Church
Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Beta Chapter
The Community Foundation of
Greater Greensboro
Reich Family Foundation
United Way of Greater Greensboro

Individual Donors



Youth Focus would like to thank the individual donors who have given so generously to give our youth the help they need today so they can have hope for tomorrow. Thank you for your gifts made between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024.



Isa and Marikay Abuzuaiter
Heather Adams
Jennifer Aguilar
April Albritton
Rebecca Alexander
Brad and Jamie Armistead
Angela Atkins
Tamara Augustin
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Thomas Jones and Jay Brower
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Wanda Nelson	Desmond Sheridan	David and Tara Wood
Esther and Thanh Ngo	Margee Shore	John Wooten
John and Carrie Nicolson	Kristina Singleton	Rob Wright
Tjai and Sarah Nielsen	Allison Slaby	Conny Wulff
Christy Norrod	Jordan Smith	Jessica Yanez
Hollis Oberlies	Olivia and Macon Smith	Barry and Joyce Youngblood
Don Olson	Jeff Smith	Candice Zaragoza
Tyler and Pamela Olson	Gary and Sallie Smith	Sarah Zimmer



YOUTH FOCUS

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