

# The Ripple Effect

Changing One Life  
Changes Everything



**YOUTH FOCUS**  
Annual Report 2025



# Letter from Leadership

This past year at Youth Focus has reminded us of a powerful truth: when one life changes, everything changes. A single moment of safety, a caring adult, or an unexpected opportunity can create a ripple that reaches into families, classrooms, workplaces, and even generations yet to come.

Every young person who comes to us brings a story and a world of possibility. Some seek refuge. Others search for hope. Many simply need someone to believe in them.

And when Youth Focus steps in—when you step in—that moment of support doesn't stay small. It grows into something none of us could create alone.

This year, we saw teens reconnect with school, young adults envision futures they once thought impossible, and families breathe easier knowing their child is safe. These victories extend far beyond the individual; they strengthen communities and build brighter futures.

The ripple effect is real, and you are an essential part of it.

Your generosity, advocacy, and belief in our mission allow us to provide safe housing, crisis intervention, counseling, and the steady encouragement every young person deserves. Because of you, these moments of care continue outward—shaping choices, restoring hope, and creating lasting change.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to widening our reach, strengthening our programs, and ensuring every young person in our community has a safe place to turn.

Together, we are creating ripples that grow into waves of change.

With gratitude for the change we're creating together,

Stacy James,  
FY 24-25 Board Chair



**YOUTH FOCUS**

Sarah Roethlinger,  
Executive Director



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## 2024-2025

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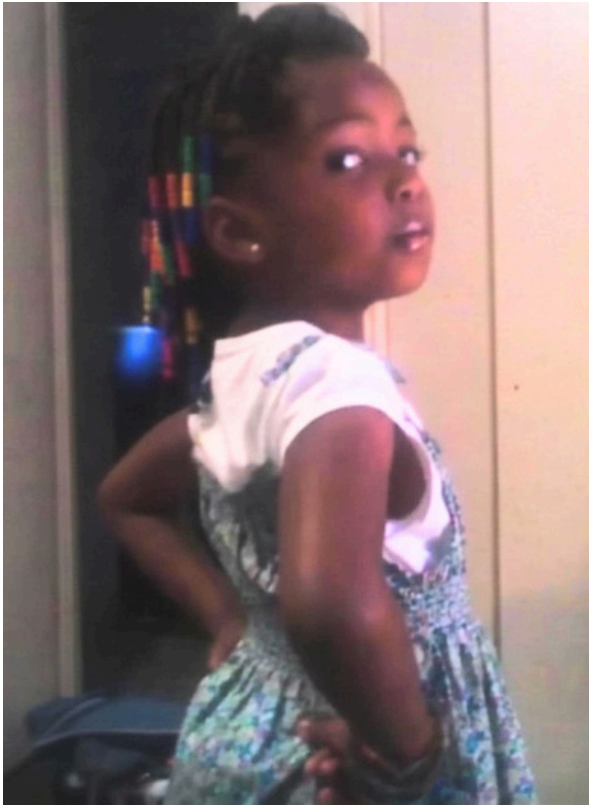
**Zackary Logan**  
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**Dr. Carey Williams**  
Carolina Pediatrics of the Triad



# Rachel's Story:



For most of her childhood, Rachel learned how to disappear.

Not in the way people leave, but in the way a young person learns to go quiet inside themselves just to survive.

She grew up in a small, overcrowded house filled far beyond its walls: two siblings, three cousins, her mom and stepdad, animals, noise, chaos. Rachel shared a room with four people, a bunk bed, and brothers sleeping on the floor. There was never enough food. There were drugs and alcohol. Strangers kicked in doors. Fleas from the dogs and cats left her covered in bites. Music blasted late into school nights from her stepfather's studio, stealing the rest her growing mind and body needed.

In that environment, Rachel didn't have space to be a child. Let alone dream about her future.

**"I was abused and neglected," she says quietly.  
"I dissociated a lot. That was how I survived."**

At 15, Rachel got her first job. But unlike many teenagers, her paycheck didn't go toward movies, clothes, or time with friends.

Every dollar went back into the household. To food, to bills, to helping her siblings and cousins get through another week. Rachel carried responsibility far heavier than her years.

By the time she graduated high school, her family was facing eviction. While her peers were thinking about decorating dorm rooms, Rachel was buying camping gear. She was preparing herself to live outside. Even though she was working as many hours as she could at Panera Bread, she could feel the ground giving way beneath her.

**Then one day, a coworker mentioned a resource.**

# A Ripple that Keeps Moving

Rachel went home, alone in the house for once. She describes the moment as a kind of quiet shift—like something inside her finally said, “It’s time.” She called Youth Focus.

Rachel remembers, “I was crying when I talked to Ms. Ali, but she felt for me.”

“I felt hopeful. I had been praying for something good to happen.” The response was quick. Within weeks, Rachel entered Youth Focus’ **HEARTH Transitional Living Program**.

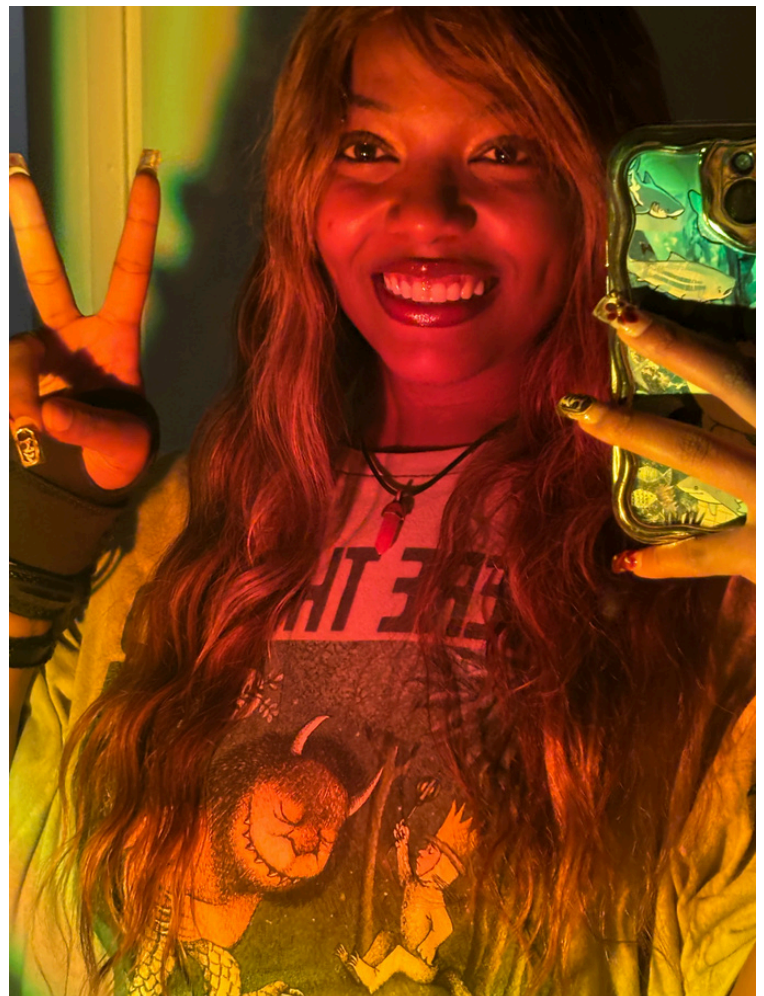
“I wasn’t nervous,” she says. “I was excited. I was thinking, ‘Where am I going to be? Who am I going to be?’”

For the first time, Rachel had something she had never truly known: stability.

A safe place to sleep. Quiet. Structure. A home where her nervous system could finally rest. “It was so great to have time to work on myself,” she says. “Being in a structured environment really helped me.”

It also gave her freedom in ways that may seem small, but were life changing. She purchased an electric bike, and this allowed her to get to work, appointments, and daily responsibilities on her own. “That bike represented independence,” she says. “It gave me freedom. I could move through my life without relying on anyone else.”

Rachel worked tirelessly, sometimes holding three jobs at once. She got a raise. She saved. And still, the pull of her past remained. Even after finding safety herself, she continued sending money back to support her struggling family. Emergencies came. Savings disappeared.



One day, riding in the car with another resident and a Youth Focus staff member, Rachel made a joke and called him "Uncle Ruben." Then she paused.

"I realized... these people feel like family," she says. "They give me grace to grow."

Rachel began to see something new: that using support was not weakness. It was a bridge. It was a way forward.

Inside the program, she built deep connections with other residents, friends who understood her story without explanation.

"We had each other's backs," she says. "Those relationships mattered so much. We weren't just clients, we were community."



Rachel told them, "I want to be comfortable without struggling all the time."



That sentence became a turning point.

Through Youth Focus' rapid rehousing program, **HEARTH Beyond**, Rachel moved into her own apartment. She partnered with NCWorks. She completed her dental assistant certification and radiology training.

Today, she is working as a dental assistant. She maintains her home. She pays her bills. She schedules her own appointments. She protects her mental and physical health.

She is standing firmly on her own two feet.

"If it weren't for Youth Focus," Rachel says, "I'd probably be getting high and drinking. I wouldn't have the mental strength of independence."

But Rachel's story isn't only about what she escaped. It's about what she is now creating.

Since moving into her own place, Rachel was able to reunite with someone important--her pet, Honey. Honey had stayed at her mother's home, but he wasn't eating well and was frequently getting hurt. Now, Honey lives with Rachel as her support animal. Safe, cared for, and loved.

"Being able to take care of him properly means everything to me," Rachel says.

A stable home changes how a young person sees the world. It changes how they handle stress, how they form relationships, how they dream. It changes what becomes possible. Not just for them, but for everyone connected to them.

### **Rachel is that ripple.**

She is rewriting what adulthood can look like. She is showing her siblings and cousins that survival is not the only option. That support exists. That peace is real. That a future can be built.

And the steadiness she fought for will continue to ripple out to the family she may raise, the patients she will care for, and the community to which she is now strong enough to contribute.



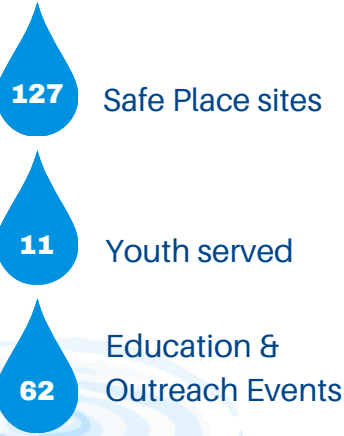
**"I finally  
get to focus  
on who I  
am."**

# Programs & Impact

## 2024-2025

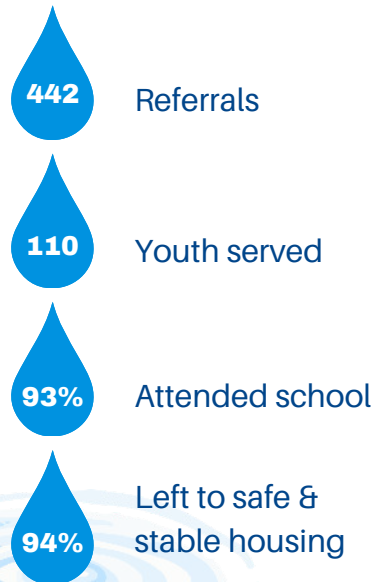
### Safe Place

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.



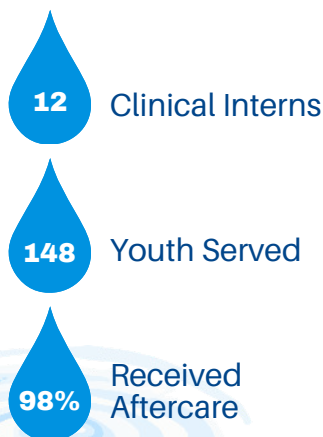
### Act Together

Act Together is an emergency shelter for youth ages 11 to 17 who have run away, are experiencing crisis, are 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 provided.



### Safe Haven

Safe Haven offers free mental health counseling and wrap-around supports for youth ages 11-24 experiencing homelessness. The program ensures every young person in Youth Focus housing has seamless access to trauma-informed outpatient therapy, peer support, enhanced case management, help securing benefits, and other critical services.



## HEARTH: TLP

Similar to dorm-style housing, youth ages 18-21 share a two-bedroom apartment with a roommate in a unit leased by Youth Focus. One unit serves as a staff office and gathering space.

This program offers some independence while keeping staff nearby as youth learn and practice independent living skills. Youth can stay up to 18 months.



Referrals



Youth served



Working or in school



## My Sister

## Susan's House

Home for pregnant or parenting youth ages 16-21 where moms achieve independent living goals so they can provide a good 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.



Referrals



Moms & children served



Working or in school



Discharged to stable housing

## 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 and the surrounding area. 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.



Youth & Dependent children



Maintained long-term housing



Participated in case management



# 2025 Love Opens Doors

As we gathered at the 2025 Love Opens Doors event, we were humbled by the gravity of our mission—Youth Focus is literally saving lives.

We heard Paige’s story, how she had lost hope for the future and feared she might not survive without change; her video below shows just how powerfully her life has shifted.


We also learned about a young teen lured to our community by someone pretending to be someone else online. Only after arriving in High Point did she realize the danger she was in, but because she knew about Safe Place, she was able to reach Youth Focus for help.

And we heard from Trinity, who found refuge for herself and her young son after escaping domestic violence. Six years later, she returned to share how life-changing her time at My Sister Susan’s House had been, reflecting, “Most importantly we were safe, and still to this day the safest place we have ever been—the most supportive, impactful, genuine support and love a girl and her baby needs.”



Watch Paige’s Story  
[bit.ly/PaigeAT](https://bit.ly/PaigeAT)




 Love Opens Doors  
photography provided by  
Hughey Photography

# The Ripple Effect of Generosity

This year, your generosity set powerful ripples in motion. Each gift—large or small—became a point of impact that moved outward into the lives of youth like Paige and Trinity. Because of you, lives were saved, hope was restored, and futures were changed.

Thank you for believing in this work and for helping create change that continues to move outward, shaping what's possible for generations to come.

2024-2025 Giving		Donors		2025 Love Opens Doors Sponsors	
Unrestricted	\$270,209	Current	120	<p>Presenting</p> 	
Restricted	\$347,268	New	98		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$617,477</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>218</b>		

## Sources of Giving

Individuals	\$161,481
Corporations/ Organizations	\$105,946
Foundations	\$300,050
United Way	\$ 50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$617,477</b>



**Champion**



**Protector**



**Hero**

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




**HONDA**

**Visionary**







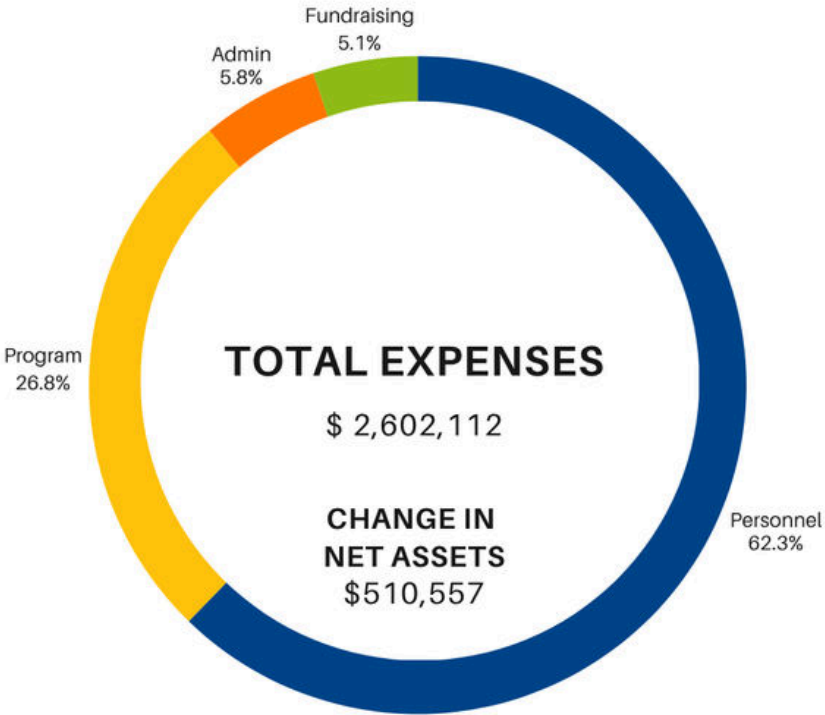
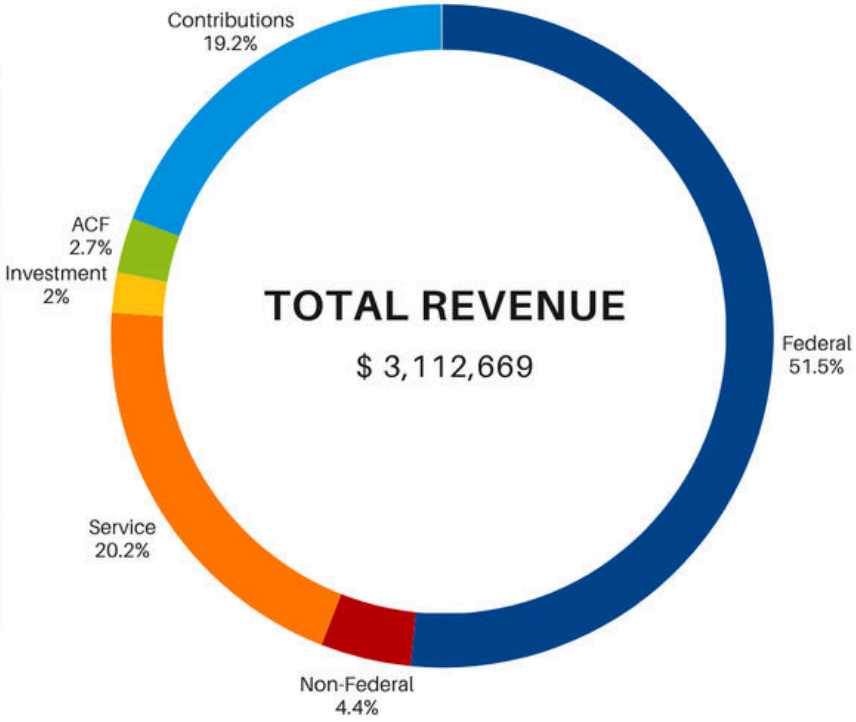
**Role Model**







# 2024 2025 Financial Overview

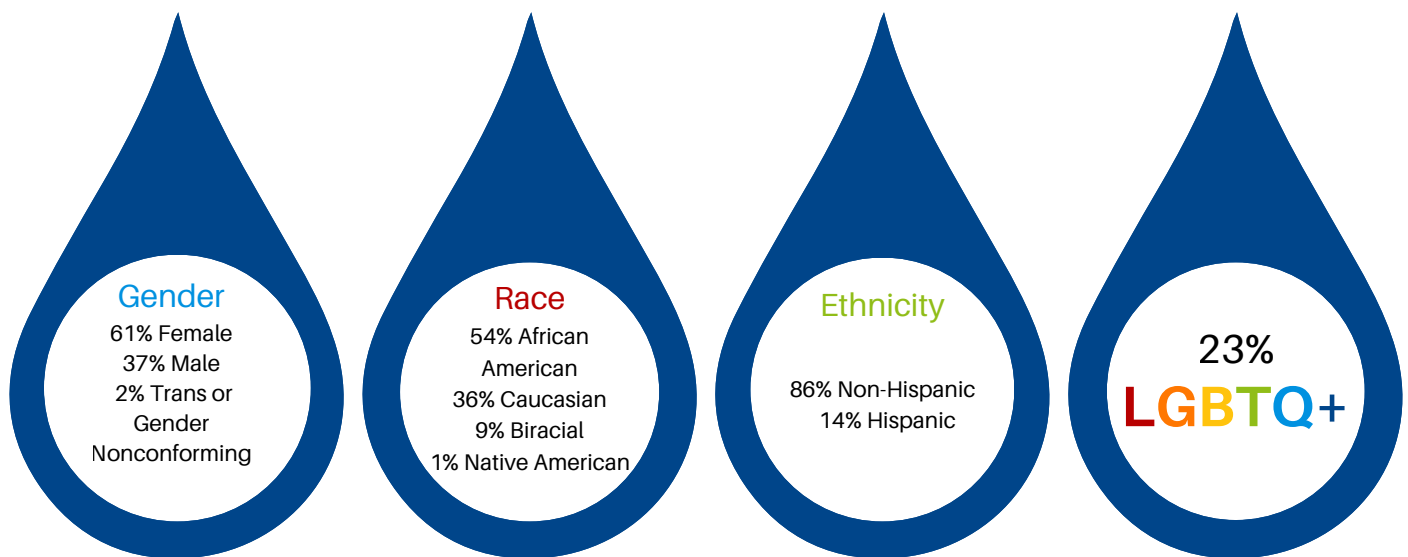


# The Ripple Effect of Financial Stability

Because of the support of individuals, local companies, community foundations, and others who believe in our mission, Youth Focus has remained strong through turbulent financial times. Thank you for ensuring our programs have the resources they need to change lives. As federal grant funding becomes increasingly unsteady, we have relied more than ever on the generosity of our community—and we could not have met this year's needs without you.

At the same time, we feel a deep and growing urgency. Our housing programs received **846 referrals last year, yet we were only able to serve 21% of those youth** simply because we did not have the beds available. The need is great—and it is rising.

That urgency becomes even more profound when you consider who these young people are. The majority come from communities that have long faced underinvestment and systemic barriers. Many have grown up in the shadows of poverty, instability, and limited access to essential resources. These are bright, capable young people who have not been given the same starting point or safety net as many of their peers. When they reach out to Youth Focus, they are often reaching out after every other option has fallen away.



Our youth do not need charity—they need access to the same safety, stability, and opportunity every young person deserves. And when they receive it, the change is immediate and lasting.



With your continued support, we can widen that access, meet more of the calls that come in each day, and continue creating ripples of transformation for the young people who need us most.

# Join Us in Our Mission



## Volunteer



There are lots of different ways to volunteer. Check out our volunteer page to view and sign up for opportunities and sign 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.



# The Ripple Effect of Community



Volunteers stepped in with creativity, each group offering what they do best—whether hosting game nights with our youth or rolling up their sleeves to clear storage spaces. Every act of service, big or small, became part of a growing ripple of support that strengthened youth and staff alike.





## Multi-Year Giving Society

Youth Focus is profoundly grateful to our 2024-2025 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 Trust

\$75,000+ Commitment

Lennar

### Circle of Life

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

Crowder Construction  
Diversified Electrical Technology

### Circle of Dreams

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

Melissa Greer  
Lomonaco Investments  
(Jon & Laurie Ford, Brian Ford)  
Jeff & Shirley Vestal

### Circle of Champions

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

Camino Law  
Michelle Haaf  
Stacy & Brian James  
Sarah & Tjai Nielsen  
Javier & Carrie Rodriguez  
Dr. Carey & James Williams

### Circle of Hope

\$3,000-\$5,999

Amy & Joe Arceneaux  
Gayla Bivens  
Marshand Hager & Teresa Bonnstetter  
Anne & Joseph Britt  
Thomas Jones & Jay Brower  
Teresa Call  
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Emily & Megan Krechel  
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Jennifer Mangrum  
Tanner Muse & Eric Stevens  
Christy Norrod  
Eoin O'Sullivan  
Debbie Reynolds  
Sarah & Erik Roethlinger  
Elizabeth & David Safran  
LaToya C. Waddell  
Robin & Glenn Wise



## 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 2024-2025.

A Joyous Transition  
Ally  
Apple, Inc.  
Aqua Drill, Inc  
Arch Mortgage Insurance Company  
BlueCross BlueShield of NC Foundation  
Breece Enterprises, Inc.  
Carolina Pediatrics of the Triad  
Chase's Chance  
Columbia Forest Products  
Community Foundation of GSO -  
    Women to Women  
Crowder Construction Company  
Emerge Ortho  
Erin Henry Real Estate Team  
First Baptist Church of Greensboro  
Forsyth Co. Missionary UN  
Garman Homes  
Greensboro Civitan Club  
Guilford Green Foundation  
Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, Inc.  
Hoffman Hydronics, LLC  
Honda  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church  
IQVIA

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Lake Jeanette Orthodontics &  
    Pediatric Dentistry  
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LT Apparel Group  
Mother Murphy's  
Nat Greene Kiwanis  
NC Dental Hygienists Association  
Oechsli  
Pinnacle United Methodist Church  
Pleasant Union Church  
Replacements Ltd.  
Residential Building Specialties  
Sisterly Essentials  
Smith Richardson Foundation, Inc.  
Snake, Rabbit, and Snail Bookmobile  
SouthEnd Exteriors  
Southwest Guilford High School  
Spectrum  
St. Mark United Holy Church  
Starbucks Foundation  
Target Corporation  
TE Connectivity  
Team Pest USA  
The Earl and Kathryn Congdon  
    Family Foundation  
The EducateDancer Studio  
Triangle Grading & Paving  
Truist Financial Corporation  
United Way of Greater Greensboro  
Urgent Church  
Vivid Dental - Greensboro  
VMP Construction  
Weaver Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation



## 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, 2024 and September 30, 2025.

Jennifer Aguilar  
Dave Aiken  
Michelle & David Akamine  
Nikki Allred  
Jamie & Brad Armistead  
Angela Atkins  
Beverly Banaszak  
Jacquelyn & Phil Bargoil  
Salina & Landon Barksdale-Clark  
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Anne Taylor Frost  
Brennon Graham  
Debra Gunter  
Jordan Hammond  
Angela & Scott Harris  
Dedra Hatcher  
Amy Hinshaw  
Tara Hodges  
Charles Hodierne  
Betty Humphries





*My Sister Susan's House celebrated 15 years of serving pregnant and parenting youth.*

- |                          |                             |                            |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
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# YOUTH FOCUS

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