



YOUTH FOCUS

Annual Report

2022
2023



2022-2023

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Letter from Leadership

Since 1970, Youth Focus has surrounded vulnerable youth with the services they need in order to find hope for a better future. When you look at our logo, you see outstretched arms creating a circle of support. This is the essence of who we are. Our Board of Directors and all of our Leadership Staff are laser focused on making sure every youth who is touched by our services feels that circle of support.

You cannot make a circle big enough to adequately surround our kids without linking arms with lots of other people. This includes all of the community partners that help provide direct services like health care, vocational and educational skill building, clothing and furniture banks, personal growth curriculums, and so much more.

It includes the Youth Focus Team who tirelessly show up for kids even when those kids are lashing out because they are hurt and scared. It includes our Board of Directors who give of their time and expertise to ensure Youth Focus operates with integrity, quality, and longevity. It includes the government entities, Foundations, the United Way, and other funders who believe in Youth Focus' ability and expertise to move the needle on youth homelessness.

And most importantly, it includes each of you. Our donors, supporters, and volunteers are the backbone of our organization. We literally could not do it without you. As you read about the impact Youth Focus has had on our community over the past fiscal year, please know that you are an important part of that circle of support. Thank you!

Gratefully,



Stacy James,
Board Chair



Sarah Roethlinger,
Executive Director



YOUTH FOCUS

Hope, Empowerment, & Resiliency through Housing



YOUTH FOCUS
HELP TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW

When Tavius was a young child, he dreamed of joining the military. Just like many of his family members before him, he wanted to serve his country and he knew it was a great opportunity, even at his young age. Tavius was always mature for his age and he was focused on his future dreams. Unfortunately, life threw Tavius some curve balls that caused his dreams to move to the back burner. Due to a series of difficult circumstances that converged towards the end of high school, Tavius found himself on the streets with no shelter or housing of any kind.

At just the young age of 18, he found himself completely on his own with less than two hundred dollars in his pocket. There were no viable options for Tavius to find help, so he had to figure out how to keep himself safe as well as find food to eat. Survival became his only focus. Tavius is a bright and motivated young man and so he channeled all of his resourcefulness into navigating each day as safely as he could. Knowing he was most vulnerable at night, Tavius slept during the day so he could stay awake and on the move throughout the night. Every day he would try to locate public places where he could sleep unnoticed. This would allow him to remain awake and vigilant throughout the night. This might include a quiet corner of the public library or a study room at the local community college. He also used the time at local libraries to research places where he could access food and basic personal care items. Without a stove or refrigerator, he had to find non-perishable items that didn't require heating. It also had to be lightweight and portable since he carried everything with him from place to place.





This was no easy task. Occasionally the food pantries would provide hot meals. However, most of Tavius' meals consisted of crackers, peanut butter sandwiches, and non-perishables from pop-top cans since he didn't even have a can opener. He was careful in how he used what little money he had because he knew it would not last very long, and he had to be able to take the bus to the pantries and various locations around town.

As challenging as finding food might be, the nights were by far the hardest. There were many nights Tavius would find himself alone on a park bench waiting for the light of morning watching every moving shadow and listening for every strange noise. With no phone or anything to distract him, those dark hours felt endless.

Eventually, Tavius learned about the HEARTH Transitional Living Program, or TLP for short. HEARTH stands for "Hope, Empowerment, and Resiliency through Housing." This was exactly what Tavius needed!

Tavius is not the only youth who needs help.

Nationally,

1 in 30 adolescents

&

1 in 10 young adults

experience homelessness each year

Locally in the 2022-2023 school year,
Guilford County Schools identified

3,120

youth experiencing homelessness.

Of youth experiencing homelessness:

70% report mental health difficulties

29% struggle with substance abuse

45x more likely to consider suicide

African American youth experience homelessness at about 2x the rate of White non-Hispanic peers.

LGBTQ+ youth have a 120% higher risk of experiencing some form of homelessness.

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED are 4.5x more likely to experience homelessness than peers who completed high school.

Using the library computers, Tavius reached out to the program and began the admission process. Communication was challenging given Tavius' transient locations and lack of a phone, but he found a way to keep the communication lines open and was able to successfully enroll in the program in May of 2023.

HOPE: For the first time in a very long time, Tavius was able to slowly move out of survival mode and start thinking about the possibilities for the future. That dream of a career in the military that had been derailed? Now he is able to work towards eligibility if he wants to pursue this for his future.

EMPOWERMENT: Tavius is now in the driver's seat of his future, and HE gets to decide where his path will take him. Through case management, Tavius is able to explore his vocational aptitudes and interests and create ways to pursue those to expand possibilities for his future. Tavius has really enjoyed learning how to cook from Mr. Ruben, one of the Case Managers at TLP. Not having any

culinary skills prior to the program, Tavius has attended cooking groups as well as individual cooking sessions with Mr. Ruben. He is working full-time as a server at a local steak house and is currently training to be a cook at the restaurant. Additionally, he is enrolled in the auto mechanics program at Guilford Community Technical College. Because all of his living expenses are covered through the program, he is able to save money for the future. Tavius is taking full advantage of all the resources available to him at HEARTH TLP. This includes counseling, case management, and independent skill-building groups.



Our Mission: Helping youth achieve safety, security, and success.

Last year, Youth Focus responded to the need and wrapped vulnerable kids with services.



RESILIENCY: Research shows social support is a critical part of developing resiliency. Tavius is now a part of a larger community—he is no longer on his own. There is a whole team of people committed to seeing him find long-term success and reach his goals. He is also with other peers in the program who can relate to his journey. While their circumstances may have been different, they all share the terrifying experience of homelessness. And from outside the program, he has felt the love and support from all the volunteers who give of their time and resources so generously. One example during the holidays was the Nat Greene Kiwanis Club who asked him for a Christmas Wish List. One of Tavius’ wishes? A rice cooker for his kitchen! On Christmas morning, he found that rice cooker under the tree along with LOTS of other gifts that were specifically picked for him! Little did he know how he would move from the humble beginnings of cooking rice at home to eventually cooking in a commercial kitchen!

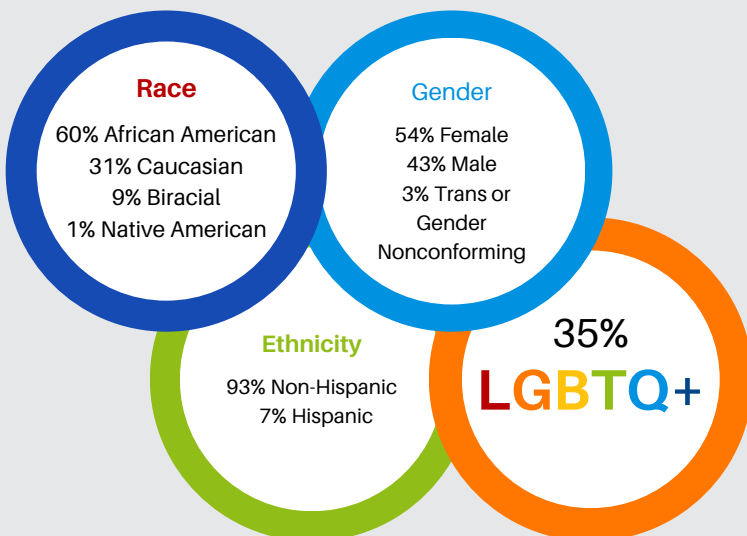


HOUSING: Tavius now has his own bedroom in a two-bedroom apartment that he shares with a roommate. Program staff are nearby in another apartment that serves as the program office and a place where the youth can meet for various groups and activities. The fridge is full of groceries, his utilities are provided, and the cabinets are stocked with all the essentials he needs to make meals. And most importantly, he can finally sleep. A deep and restful sleep without the need to always keep one eye open.

“TLP has made it possible for me to reach goals that were not within reach before.”



Demographics of the 185 Youth Served Last Year



Programs & Impact 2022-2023

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, 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.

120 Safe Place sites

youth found

11 Youth Focus via Safe Place

91% left to stable housing



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.

467 Referrals

121 youth served

90% attended school

95% left to safe & stable housing



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.

New federal funding Starts FY 23-34

5 year grant- \$449,272 /year

6 new positions (2 therapists)

1 of 24 awards in the US

HEARTH: TLP

Similar to dormitory-style housing, youth ages 18-21 share a two-bedroom apartment with a roommate in an apartment leased by Youth Focus. All the apartments are in one complex in High Point, and one serves as the staff office as well as a gathering space. 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.

141 Referrals

14 youth served

100% working or in school

56 Referrals

16 moms and children **100%** discharged to stable housing

100% working or in school

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.

34 youth and dependent children

100% discharged to stable housing

100% participated in case management

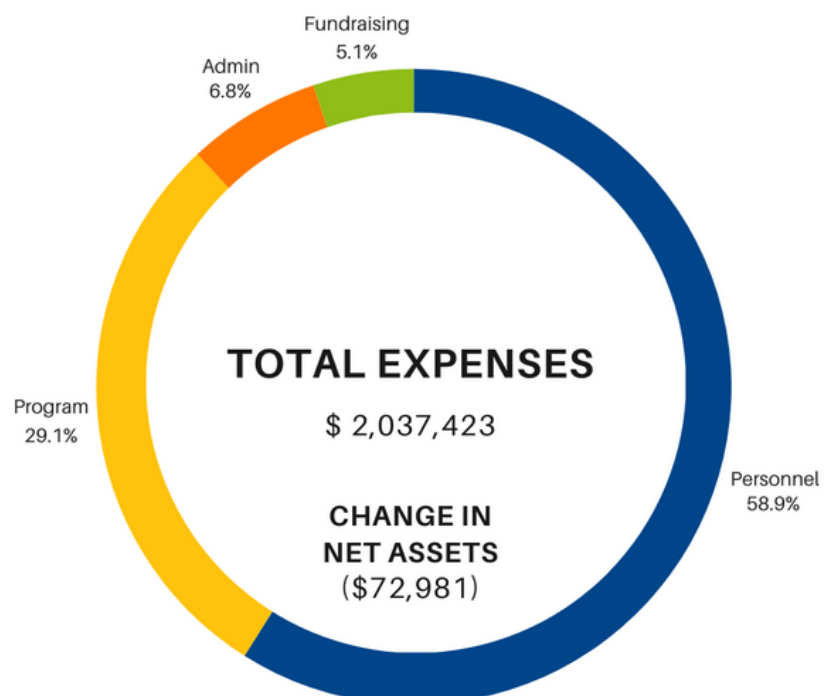
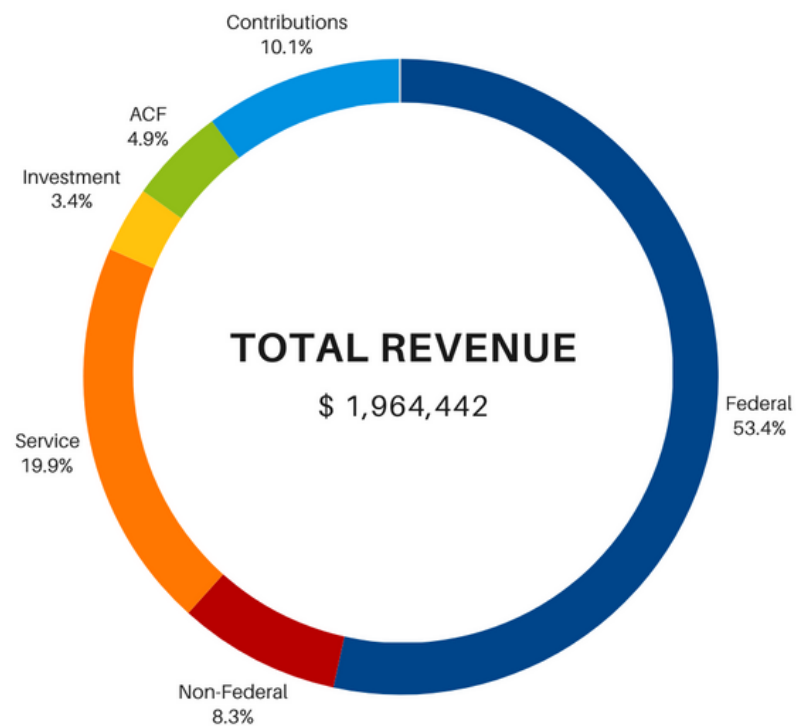
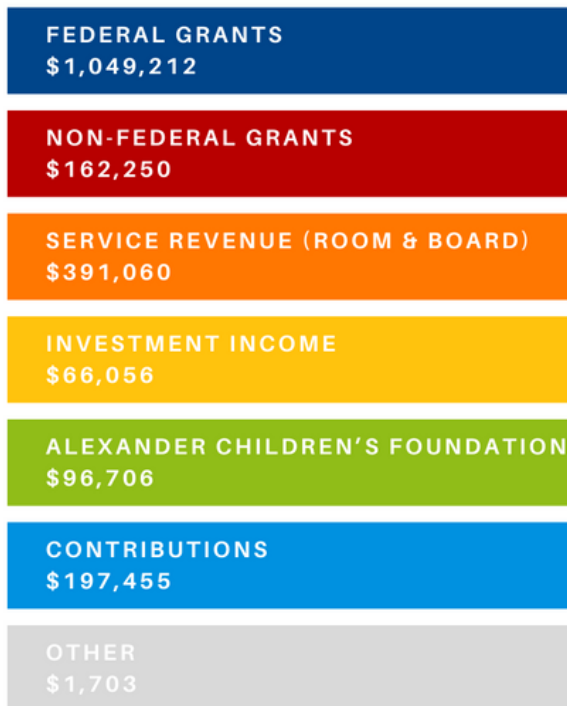
My Sister Susan's House

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.



2023 Financial Overview

Youth Focus is built upon the power of collaboration and our ability to provide needed services to vulnerable youth reflects this same spirit. We could not advance our mission of helping youth achieve safety, security, and success without the investment of generous donors, corporations, foundations, government entities, and other community organizations.



Your Support in Action



SETUP OF STABLE HOUSING

\$1,200/household

From security deposits to all of the supplies needed to live successfully on their own, your support opens doors for youth to establish themselves in their own home.



TRANSPORTATION

\$1,500/month

Youth need a lot of help getting to school, work, health appointments, recreational outings, and more. With your help, Youth Focus is able to make sure youth can get to where they need to be so they can achieve their goals.



LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS

\$2,500/week

Youth Focus brings in over a million dollars in federal funding to benefit youth in our community. But we could not do it without your support. Our federal grants require investment from the local community and your support allows us to meet that requirement.



SAFETY NET FOR YOUTH

\$2,088/day

Act Together Crisis Care is the only youth emergency shelter in a 100-mile radius of Guilford County and serves as a critical safety net for youth in our community who are in-crisis. Your support is a necessary part of ensuring Act Together's doors are open 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Giving at a Glance

2022-2023 Giving

Unrestricted	\$172,784
Restricted	\$ 35,918
Total	\$208,702

Donors

Current	81
New	179
Total	260

Sources of Giving

Individuals	\$105,945
Corporations/ Organizations	\$ 64,257
Foundations	\$ 13,500
United Way	\$ 25,000
Total	\$208,702



2023 Love Opens Doors

As we gathered at 2023 Love Opens Doors, Sarah reminded of us about what Mr. Rogers always encouraged when he said, "Look for the helpers in times of crisis." The banquet tent at Summerfield Farms was filled with the "helpers" who wanted to ensure youth in crisis can find safety, security, and success.



Donor Spotlight

"I'm so proud to have had an impact on something so important for kids and their families."

Debbie Reynolds has been a faithful supporter of Youth Focus for as long as anyone remembers. She's been a part of the mental health community for years, graduating from UNCG/UNCW with a BA in Psychology and a Masters' Degree in Counseling from UNCG. Debbie first worked as a social worker with the Forsyth County Department of Social Services and then went on to have a 28-year career in the Exceptional Children's Department in the Guilford County School system.

In her roles in the community, she saw first-hand how important Youth Focus' services were for vulnerable kids. Her belief in the cause eventually inspired her to serve on Youth Focus' Board of Directors and she has been a passionate supporter ever since. She was one of Youth Focus' first multi-year donors with her three-year financial commitment and she renews that commitment every three-years. With her own "down to earth" and straightforward approach, Debbie recently quipped, "since I'm a 'compulsive planner' I've already designated that donations to Youth Focus be included in my future obituary as an alternative to flowers!" Thank you, Debbie for all you support over the years.



**Thank you to our
2023 Hero Sponsors**



Love Opens Doors photography donated by Allison Hughey.



We our Volunteers

91 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

\$18,224 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 2022-2023 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 Dreams

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

Lomonaco Investments
(Jon & Laurie Ford, Brian Ford)

Circle of Champions

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

Javier & Carrie Rodriguez

Circle of Hope

\$3,000-\$5,999

Jay Brower & Thomas Jones
Sandy & Julie Buchanan
Camino Law
JD Logistix
Erik & Dot Kimelman
Ben & Jennifer Lewis
Jennifer Love
Tjai & Sarah Nielsen
Don Olson
Debbie Reynolds
Erik & Sarah Roethlinger
Dr. Carey & James Williams

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 2022-2023.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.,
Sigma Kappa Omega Chapter
AmazonSmile Foundation
Aon
Arch Mortgage Insurance Company
Bank of America
Camino Law
CarMax Foundation
Carolina Pediatrics of the Triad
Chase's Chance
Columbia Forest Products
Community Collaboration for Children, Inc
Cone Health Foundation
Downtown Greensboro Foundation
DRB Group
Elizabeth Burns Real Estate LLC
Emerge Ortho
Investi Solutions
Evangel Fellowship Word Ministries
Garman Homes
Greensboro Arm Wrestling League
Heat Transfer Sales, LLC
Housing & Neighborhood Development
City of Greensboro
I M Copeland
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church
IQVIA
Isley Family Foundation

JC Waller & Associates PC
JD Logistix, Inc.
Level Up Parenting
Lomonaco Investments
LT Apparel Group
Makarios Charitable Fund
Mango Dental
McWhorter Concepts, Inc.
Mother Murphy's
Oechsli
Piedmont Pediatric Dentistry
PIN Staffing Solutions
Pinnacle United Methodist Church
Replacements Ltd.
Service Roofing & Sheet Metal Company
Starbucks Foundation
TE Connectivity
The Greensboro Center for Pediatric Dentistry
The Nest School - High Point North Gate
United Way of Greater Greensboro
Wells Fargo Foundation
Williams
Yield Giving



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, 2022 and September 30, 2023.

Marikay Abuzuaiter
Gretchen Adkins
April Albritton
Allyson Ansinha
Angela Atkins
Justin and Christy Bailey
Pamela Barnes
Mitch and Katherine Barron
Candy Barwick
Joe and Michele Basile
Craig Bass
Stacilyn Bellemare
Myrna Benavidez
Jim and Lynn Bennett
Sara Bolha
Bert and Nikki Bolick
Mariah Bolin
Rachel Bradley
Janelle Breneman
Jay Brower and Thomas Jones
Matt Brown
Kathy Bruning
Sandy and Julie Buchanan
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Rosemary Dedman
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Stacia Jackson

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Laurie Johnson
Tierra Johnson
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Martha Logemann
Jennifer Love
Graham and Melissa Lyles
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Ken Williams
Richard and Libby Wilson
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Tara and David Wood
Alison Woods
Melanie Yokeley
Barry and Joyce Youngblood
Amanda Youth
Sarah Zimmer
Ron Zimmerman



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