

Families First

SPRING 2024

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The MAMAS & PAPAS Campaign

"If I hadn't found Families First, I would've been lost... they always supported me, and never lost faith in me."

**- Nelis,
Mom & Families First Client**



As Mother's Day (May 12) and Father's Day (June 16) approach, join us in celebrating the caregivers in our communities.

Your gift will help fund resources and support for parents in our community. For instance, our Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPP) helps young moms like Nelis as they build better futures and our Parenting & Adoption Support Services supports loving dads like Austin to secure parental rights to have visitation and, eventually, joint custody of his daughter.

Families First meets clients where they are, strengthens their resilience, and empowers them to thrive. As a proudly inclusive organization, Families First embraces ALL types of families in their journeys toward resilience.

Help support critical programs for moms, dads, and caregivers in our community. To make a gift, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/3y20UWp.



LOVING the LEGACY

Where are they now?

Thank you to everyone who made our annual *Loving the Legacy* fundraiser a success! This year's sold-out event raised over \$400,000 to help build resilient families so all children can thrive.

Hosted on March 21 at the Atlanta History Center, *Loving the Legacy* celebrated the stories of past clients, shining a light on *Where Are They Now?*



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Supporting Teen Moms for Mother's Day

By Meagan Smith

Families First recently celebrated an early Mother's Day brunch to encourage the participants of our TeenAge Pregnant & Parenting Program (TAPP), an initiative which supports young mothers and fathers through case management, counseling, and education.

The event featured three veteran teen mothers as panelists: Dorothy Bell, Gail Samuels-Smith, and Shiamorra Green. Families First's own Behavioral Health Program Manager, Sakina Huffman, also joined the panel to share strategies for navigating the many challenges teen moms face. After the event, multiple participants shared how encouraging it was to hear stories and words of wisdom from these panelists.

Families First is grateful to the many community partners and volunteers who made this event possible:

- Que'ana Morris, the founder of the One Wellness Project, for initiating and sponsoring this uplifting event,
- The Atlanta Women's Foundation, a longtime supporter of TAPP and Families First, for catering a delicious meal for speakers and staff and creating special activity kits for the children in attendance,
- Spelman College, for organizing 15 members of its Bonner Scholars program to volunteer to babysit the children of our TAPP moms,
- Kelie Charles, Bath & Body Works VP/Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Families First Board Member, for providing self-care gifts for each mom.

The brunch was not only a celebration of courageous mothers, but also a moment to affirm that their dreams and aspirations are within reach. Families First aimed to remind the mothers that there is a village of people supporting them on their journeys. Michelle Brock-Coleman, Families First Navigator TAPP Coordinator shared, "[the Mother's Day Brunch] was about helping [these young moms] feel honored and validated...it was about uplifting them, and removing some of their doubts. It was a team of cheerleaders saying, 'you can do this, and we are here to help!' These moms were officially told 'good job!'"



Ms. Beverly Miles retires after almost 20 years at Families First

"When I reflect on my time at Families First, I will always remember the wonderful staff and leadership I had the honor of working and playing with." -Ms. Beverly

By David Gray

This month, we honor and celebrate Ms. Beverly Miles ("Ms. Beverly"), retiring after almost twenty years of invaluable service to Families First. Her work has left an indelible mark on our organization and community, and we are deeply grateful for her dedication.

Ms. Beverly devoted her life to serving her family and community. After marrying and raising two children, in the early 1970s, she worked for Congressman Charles Whalen (R-OH) until his retirement. Upon relocating to Atlanta, she joined Rep Wyche Fowler's (D-GA) staff. When Fowler was elected Senator in 1986, he promoted

Ms. Beverly to his Statewide Director of Constituent Services.

She later shifted focus to her education, earning a Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University. In addition to her work at Families First, Ms. Beverly served as Church Secretary at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.

As Ms. Beverly embarks on a new chapter, she plans to devote more time to her church and family.



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH A Partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine To Address Youth Behavioral Health Needs

By David Gray

Families First and Morehouse School of Medicine have partnered to open a new clinic for weekly child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP) services.

Families First is hosting the clinic at its main offices (80 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd NW), and Morehouse School of Medicine will staff the clinic with an attending physician, a CAP fellow, and psychiatry residents. The team will evaluate and treat mental health conditions in youth up to age 21. Services include psychiatric assessments, medication management, mental health counseling, and referrals.

The partnership provides an opportunity for cross-referral, with Morehouse Healthcare (MHC) clinicians referring youth to Families First for mental health services and Families First referring patients to MHC for primary and specialty care.

Families First CEO Paula Moody shared, "Families First is looking forward to collaborating with Morehouse School of Medicine to address the psychiatric needs of



the Westside Community. Collaboration is the essence of effective behavioral health services. Responding to the needs of people struggling with mental health challenges can't be addressed by one agency; it takes a team of organizations to break the stigma, treat trauma, and provide mental health services to everyone regardless of their circumstances."

Patients and their families may make appointments by contacting Families First at 404-853-2800 or emailing counseling@familiesfirst.org.