



# Families First

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**ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**

2024-2025

# Message from the CEO

Dear Friends,

When I stepped into the role of CEO at Families First three years ago, I made a promise—to honor and build upon our agency's substantial legacy. That promise became a bold strategy: to go deeper, think bigger, and lead with purpose.

We are committed to expanding and reimagining programs, setting ambitious goals, and tackling systemic challenges head-on—all with one unwavering mission: **to strengthen family resiliency** so all families can reach their fullest potential within their communities.

As we look to the future, one truth remains clear—resilient families are the foundation of strong, vibrant communities. Our work starts and ends with “family,” empowering every client to define what that means for themselves. The next five years are about impact, innovation, and possibility. And we're just getting started!

In FY25, Families First supported 16,858 clients across 88 Georgia counties. Of the 1,140 clients who exited a program, 83% achieved all their goals. These results reflect both the strength of the families we serve and the commitment of Families First's skilled and compassionate staff.

We pursue our mission through three Impact Areas:

- **Navigator Care Model:** Navigators tailored care plans for 662 households, connecting them to housing, employment, healthcare, legal resources, and more.
- **Lucy C. Vance Center for Behavioral Health:** Clinicians delivered 1,777 counseling sessions to 241 individuals, helping families strengthen their mental health.
- **Parenting & Adoption Support Services:** Our statewide staff supported adoptive, foster, kinship, and guardianship families with training, post-adoption services, and co-parenting education.

Families First also crafted its **five-year Strategic Plan** and now moves into FY26–FY30 with clear priorities:

- **Becoming a Center for Resiliency Excellence**  
Expand Families First's resiliency impact as a model center, guided by a data-driven blueprint for strengthening psycho-social resiliency.
- **Deepening Navigator services** for families with complex challenges.
- **Growing the Vance Center Professional Milestone Model** to help shape the next generation of Georgia's mental health clinicians.
- **Expanding co-parenting support** nationwide.
- **Enhancing adoption support** with Training for Adoption Competency (TAC)-trained Clinicians and specialized Navigators.

None of this is possible without you. Thank you to our board, donors, staff, volunteers, and partners—your leadership and generosity make every success story possible.

It is an honor to serve as CEO at this pivotal moment.

Together, we will keep strengthening family resiliency so all families can reach their fullest potential within their communities.

With gratitude and hope,

  
*Paula Moody*  
**Paula M. Moody, LCSW, MS**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

# FY 2024-2025

# Board of Directors

## OFFICERS

**CHAIRPERSON:** Brian M. Mandigo (pictured)

**1ST VICE-CHAIR:** Kirk Rich

**2ND VICE-CHAIR:** Shaina Horrell

**TREASURER:** Tripp O'Connor

**SECRETARY:** Susana Chavez

**MEMBERS AT LARGE:** Carolyn Carl, Darryl Holloman, Dr. Tamika Lasege, Marcia Nuffer, Tino Mantella, Dr. Andi Shane

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President, Aldridge Private Wealth Management Group

**Ryan Badger**  
Vice President, Aldridge Private Wealth Management Group

**Sherry Boulay**  
Managing Director, Senior Wealth Advisor, Truist Wealth

**Julianna Rue Cagle**  
President, The Goizueta Foundation

**Maria "Pia" Candotti-Sherman**  
Founding Attorney, Candotti Law Firm

**Carolyn Carl**  
Retired Vice President, Management Systems-Business Transformation, The Coca-Cola Company

**Kelie T. Charles**  
Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, Bath & Body Works

**Susana M. Chavez**  
Executive Vice President, Park Place Operations

**Joseph "Joe" Faxio**  
Founder, Faxio Private Wealth



**Darryl B. Holloman, PhD**  
Vice President, Student Affairs, Spelman College

**Shaina Horrell**  
Vice President, Learning & Development Strategy, BlackRock Atlanta

**Leonard Jennings**  
Senior Vice President, Loyalty Marketing, Synchrony Financial

**Tulu Kaifee**  
Consultant, Multicultural and DEI Strategies, IPCOMM Agency

**Leah A. LaRue**  
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**Dr. Tamika B. Lasege, MD, MHA**  
Market Medical Executive, Cigna Healthcare

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Vice President, Global Sourcing, The Home Depot

**Tino Mantella**  
Managing Partner, Retained

**Aprille L. Moore**  
Major, Unit Commander - Training, Background & Recruitment, Fulton County Sheriff's Office

**Marcia Nuffer**  
Founder, BlueShor & Former Chief Learning Officer, McKinsey & Company

**Tripp O'Connor**  
Chief Financial Officer, Alston & Bird, LLP

**Kirk Rich**  
Principal, Avison Young, Atlanta's Agency Leasing Group

**Dr. Andrea "Andi" L. Shane, MD, MPH, MSc**  
Professor of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Emory University School of Medicine & Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

**Elizabeth C. Somers**  
Community Volunteer

**Michelle Stewart**  
Partner, King & Spalding LLP

**Damien Wilson**  
President, WD Advisors and Head of HBCU Brilliance

# Fiscal Year 2024-2025

## Report Financials

Families First has achieved the highest standards of charity excellence from both Candid (formerly GuideStar) and Charity Navigator. These awards indicate our commitment to effectiveness, reliability, and transparency.

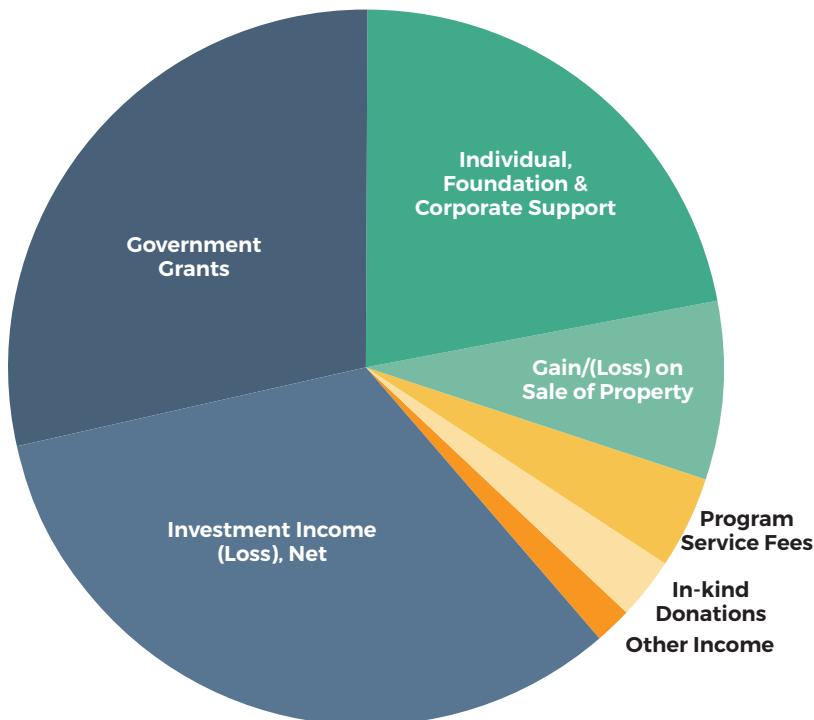
Platinum Transparency 2025

Candid.

Charity Navigator

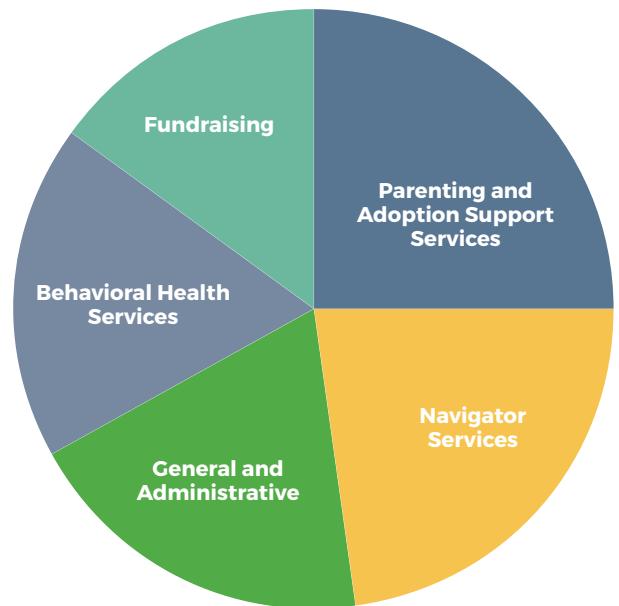


FOUR-STAR



REVENUE		
Individual, Foundation & Corporate Support	\$1,394,952	21.9%
Government Grants	\$1,818,142	28.5%
Program Service Fees	\$274,382	4.3%
In-Kind Donations	\$178,436	2.8%
Investment Income (Loss), Net	\$2,104,411	33%
Other Income	\$88,813	1.4%
Gain/(Loss) on Sale of Property	\$511,736	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,370,872</b>	

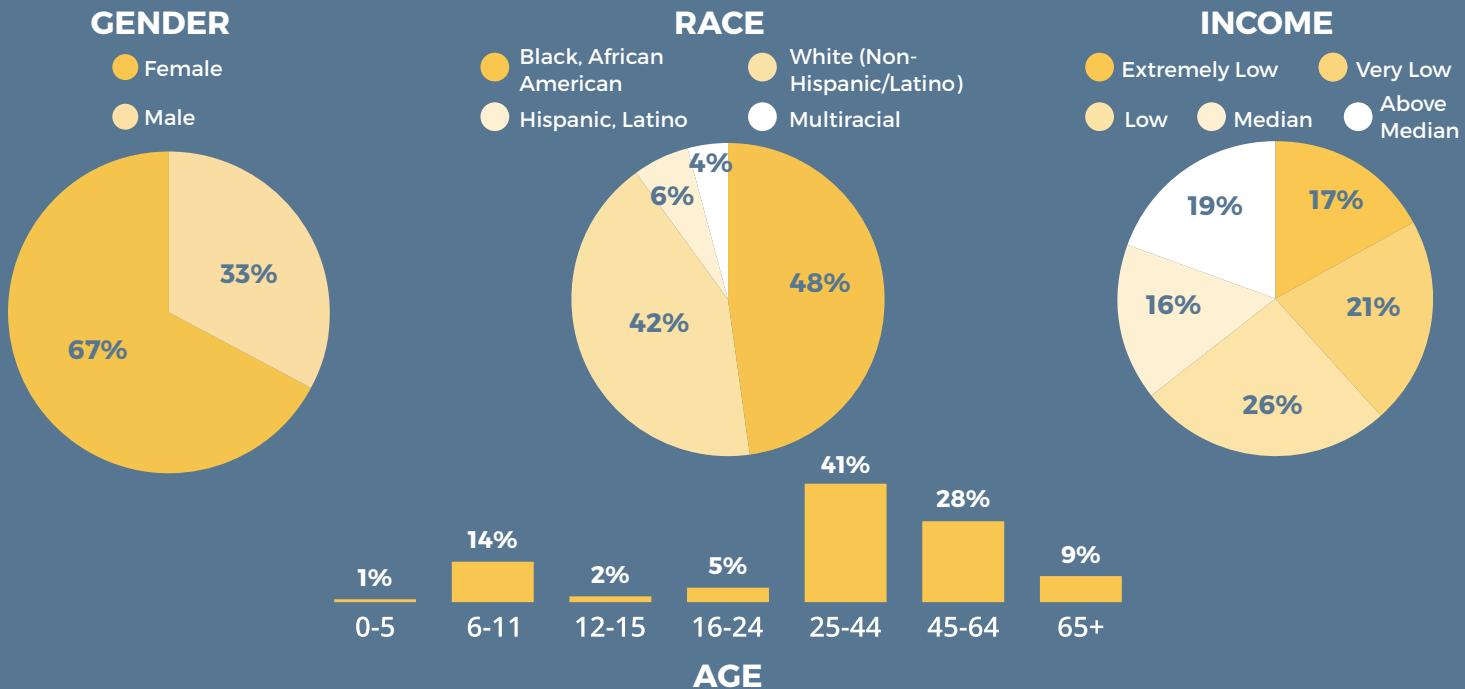
EXPENSES		
Behavioral Health Services	\$1,069,334	18%
Navigator Services	\$1,366,371	23%
Parenting and Adoption Support Services	\$1,485,186	25%
Fundraising	\$891,112	15%
General and Administrative	\$1,128,742	19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,940,745</b>	



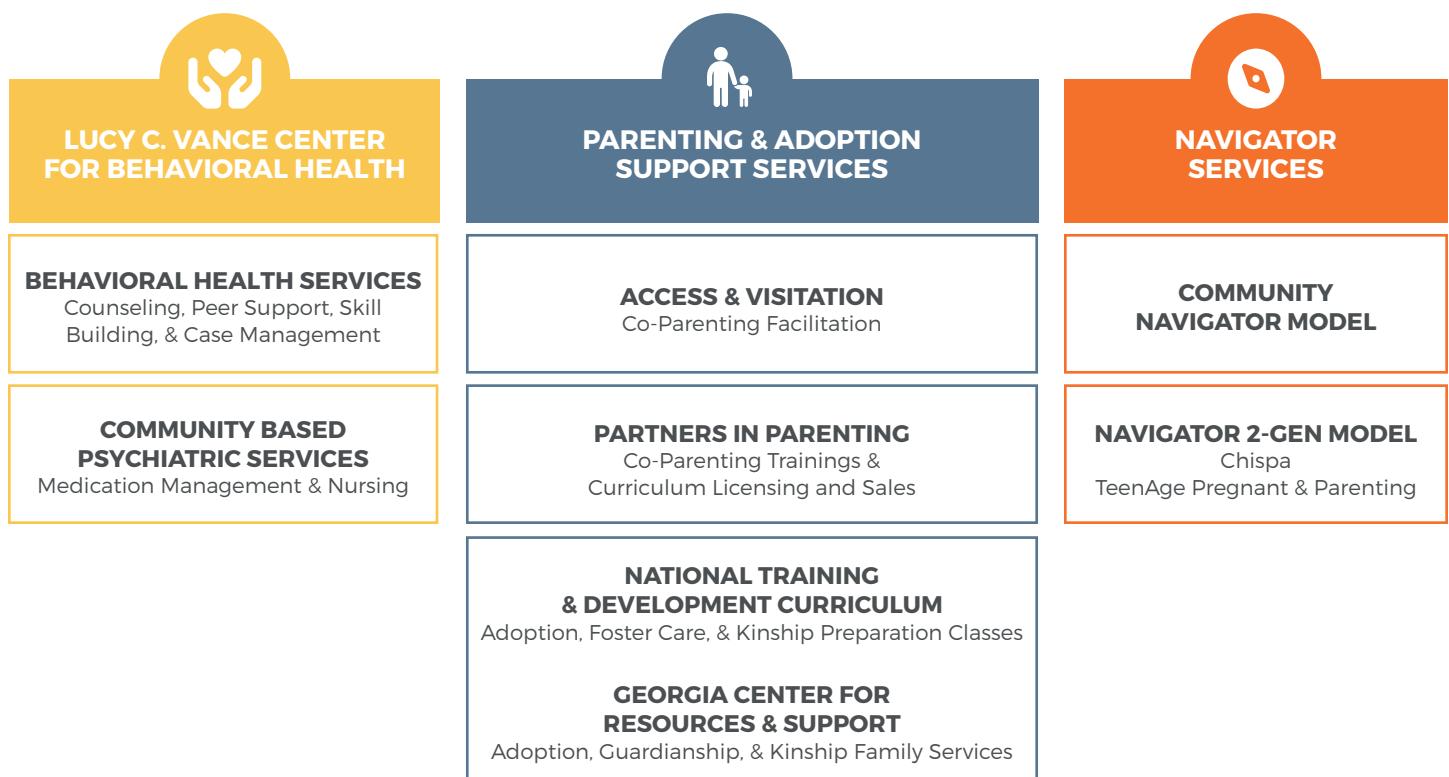
\*The financial data presented for FY24-25 is unaudited. Fully audited information will be made available on our website after the board's review and approval.

# Demographics

In FY24-25, Families First supported 16,858 children, youth, and adults through our programs. Among those who shared demographic information, two-thirds were women, nearly half identified as Black, and 64% were from low-income households.



## Impact Areas



# Lucy C. Vance Center for Behavioral Health

Our Vance Center is designed to improve the coping and functioning skills of low-income children, adults, and families by providing behavioral health services. Many clients have experienced chronic stress related to poverty, childhood trauma, family violence, health issues, substance abuse, and other social determinants of health. The Vance Center helps children, youth, and adults:

- Heal from emotional pain and trauma
- Stabilize & improve mental health
- Develop coping skills to deal with life stressors
- Strengthen family & social relationships, and
- Achieve a greater sense of well-being and improved quality of life.



## Behavioral Health Services

Counseling

Psychiatry & Nursing (Ages 0-21)

Case Management

Skill Building

Peer Support

### FY24-25 IMPACT Vance Center:

Total number of  
behavioral health sessions  
**1,777**  
(20% increase from FY24)

**49%**  
of clients showed progress  
on their treatment goals  
(goal was 40%, 122% of the goal)



## Medicaid Core Provider Certification

In 2024, Families First earned certification as a Tier II Community Medicaid “Core” provider. This year, we have expanded our services and rolled out a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to improve documentation and billing efficiencies.

## Investing in the Next Generation of Clinicians

The Vance Center continued to strengthen the professional pipeline for behavioral health providers in 2024. We hosted 3 master's-level interns, 5 pediatric psychiatry residents, and 2 pediatric psychiatry fellows. In addition, we employed 3 associate-licensed clinical social workers and professional counselors, ensuring that families have access to well-trained and compassionate care.

## Powerful Partnerships

To provide our clients wraparound services, we partner with a number of institutions and agencies to offer these vital services:

- **Pediatric Psychological Assessments** (Emory University)
- **Psychiatry Clinic for Ages 0-21** (Morehouse School of Medicine)
- **Phillis Wheatley Center** (YWCA)
- **Internship Program** (Clark Atlanta University, Georgia State University, University of Georgia)

## Commitment to Excellence

**Recipient of the 2025 American Psychiatric Association Foundation Award for Advancing Minority Mental Health**

The AAMMH enabled Families First to provide approximately 25 counseling and psychiatric sessions for clients with the greatest need, including those who were uninsured and on a sliding scale fee schedule.



# Parenting & Adoption Support Services

Continuing our 135-year legacy of caring for vulnerable children and their families, Families First provides a variety of parenting and adoption support services, including:



## NTDC HUB (formerly IMPACT)

NTDC classes equip foster, kinship, and adoptive parents with essential skills and information to care for children who have experienced trauma, loss, and separation.

**734 individuals successfully completed NTDC training.**



## GEORGIA CENTER FOR RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Provides a comprehensive support network of post-placement services to strengthen Georgia's adoptive, guardianship, kinship, and foster families.

**20,528 services provided to adoptive, guardianship, kinship and foster families.**

**14,637 GACRS trainings accessed and completed.**



## REUNION REGISTRY

Facilitates search and reunion for families impacted by adoption and access to historical information for adult adoptees.

**1,993 new individuals sought Adoption Reunion Registry services/information.**

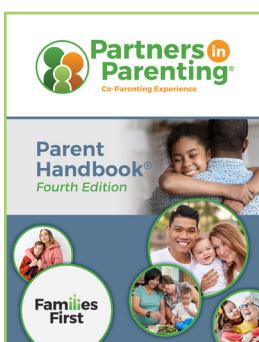


## PARENTING PLUS

**Access and Visitation:** Provides education and resources on Georgia Access and Visitation Laws and increases parenting time with both parents, including monitoring supervised visits.

**163 parents increased their parenting time, and 266 parents participated in our group parenting sessions.**

**Staff conducted 1,113 counseling sessions with parents to reduce conflicts and improve co-parenting.**



**Partners in Parenting** is Families First's evidence-informed co-parenting curriculum that helps families experiencing divorce and parental separation prioritize their children's well-being during these transitions. This interactive educational seminar equips parents with essential skills to create nurturing, stable environments that support their children's healthy emotional adjustment.

**Families First was honored to be selected for JP Morgan Chase's prestigious 2025 Work for Good program, where their IT Department will completely overhaul the Partners in Parenting Learning Management System. This comprehensive upgrade will include mobile optimization and ADA compliance improvements to significantly expand the program's reach and impact for co-parenting families.**

# Navigator Services

Families First's Navigator Services provide intensive, wraparound case management to help families navigate challenges before they escalate into crises. Many face overlapping difficulties—such as housing insecurity, unemployment, or health concerns—that cannot be addressed by a single program. Our Community Navigators walk alongside families, connecting them to a full network of internal and external resources while helping them build the resilience needed for long-term stability.



Navigator Services also houses Families First's 2-Gen programs, which strengthen families by supporting both parents and children simultaneously. These programs include TAPP, which serves pregnant and parenting teens, and CHISPA, which provides culturally responsive support to Spanish-speaking families. Both programs ensure multiple generations have the resources and tools they need to thrive.

## COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR

Our Community Navigators are dedicated case managers who provide one-on-one support, connecting families to essential services such as housing, healthcare, education, and workforce development. Their guidance helps families overcome barriers and create pathways toward stability and self-sufficiency.

## FY 24-25 IMPACT

- Provided 468 clients with a total of 2,477 community referrals



## TEENAGE PREGNANT AND PARENTING PROGRAM (TAPP):

TAPP empowers pregnant and parenting teens to build bright futures for themselves and their child(ren). The program focuses on ensuring healthy pregnancies and births, supporting teens in returning to and graduating from high school, preventing subsequent unplanned pregnancies, and developing the skills to become nurturing and effective parents.

## FY 24-25 IMPACT

- 100% of participants have safe housing
- 90% of teens were on track to achieve educational goals
- 88% of teens delayed an unplanned subsequent pregnancy while enrolled

## CHISPA:

Meaning “spark” in Spanish, Chispa ignites the potential of children ages 0-5 by equipping Spanish-speaking parents and caregivers with tools to support early learning. Using the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model, Chispa fosters strong family engagement and sets children on the path to academic and lifelong success.

## FY 24-25 IMPACT

- 91% of parents made good progress or achieved their parent interaction goal



# BACK to SCHOOL BASH

The Back-to-School Bash is Families First's vibrant annual community celebration designed to prepare students and families for a successful school year. Held each July, the event equips families with essential resources—school supplies, backpacks, groceries, lunch, and access to community services—while also creating a joyful environment filled with activities and support.

## IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Together, thanks to the generosity of our Sponsors and Community Partners, we achieved:



**1,087 Attendees**  
*Including 741 children*

**800 Backpacks**  
*With supplies*



 **300 Bags of Groceries**  
*Provided to families*

**100 Free Haircuts**  
*Administered on-site*



 **23 Community Partners**  
*Delivered vital resources and support*



## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!



 **synchrony**



**Kroger**

 **TARGET**

 **ANISA  
INTERNATIONAL**

 **Dutchess  
and Duke™**

 **KAISER  
PERMANENTE®**

 **TruRating.**



# LOVING THE LEGACY

*Healthy Homes, Resilient Families*

On March 27, 2025, Families First hosted its annual *Loving the Legacy* benefit, a powerful celebration of resilience, community, and lasting impact. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, donors and guests, we raised an incredible \$430,106, surpassing both our \$400,000 goal and last year's total. This vital support directly advances our mission to strengthen family resiliency.

The evening brought our mission to life. Guests heard directly from Families First client Shemia (pictured right), whose story revealed the power of support and perseverance, and witnessed Althea's inspiring journey in our scholarship video. Together, their stories underscored how education, encouragement, and community can open doors to brighter futures.

We are especially grateful to Presenting Sponsor, John Wieland, along with everyone who helped make the evening a success. At Families First, we believe that "once you're a part of the Families First family, you're always a member of our family"—and this night was a meaningful reminder of that enduring bond.

**A powerful lineup of community champions and changemakers inspired the evening, including:**

- **Rose Scott**, Emmy-award winning journalist, Mistress of Ceremonies
- **Rev. Senator Kim Jackson**, State Senator for GA Senate District 41, Episcopal Priest and Vicar of the Church of Common Ground, Invocationist
- **Dr. Pamela Scott-Johnson**, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Spelman College, Honorary Co-Chair
- **Juan Lacey**, Regional Vice President of Operations, Starbucks, Honorary Co-Chair
- **Aaron Murray**, Co-Founder & President at The Players' Lounge, Former Professional Football Player, Families First Champion



**2025 Loving the Legacy Sizzle Reel**  
SCAN TO VIEW



## THANK YOU TO OUR LOVING THE LEGACY SPONSORS

### VISIONARY



### PLATINUM

Elizabeth & Kirk  
Somers  
Lucy C. Vance

### COMMEMORATIVE



### EMPOWERMENT



### HISTORIC



### CLASSIC



### Presenting Sponsor: John Wieland

We are truly grateful to our Presenting Sponsor, John Wieland, for making this year's Loving the Legacy gala so special. His support and generosity, along with his invitation to host our VIP Reception at The Warehouse, created an unforgettable evening. To honor John's passion for home and community, the children in our Chispa program drew pictures of what "home" means to them, which we presented to him in a framed collage as our heartfelt thanks for his vision and commitment to building healthy homes and resilient families.

The logo for the Loving the Legacy 135th Anniversary event. It features the text 'LOVING the LEGACY' in large green letters, '135 YEARS' in a gold ribbon, and 'of Families First' in smaller green text. Below this, it says 'Save the Date' in gold script, 'Thursday, March 19, 2026' and 'Atlanta History Center'. The background has a decorative border of grey and gold dots and lines.

Scan for tickets:



Angelica's  
Success Story  
SCAN TO VIEW

# Gift-a-Family



Gift-a-Family is our special opportunity for community members and corporate partners to bring holiday cheer by fulfilling the needs and wishes of the families we serve.

Thanks to your generosity, 191 families—728 individuals—received gifts this holiday season, a heartwarming increase of more than 16% compared to last year! We are so grateful to everyone who participated in Gift-a-Family 2024!

A very special shout-out to Anisa International, TruRating, Genuine Parts Company, and BlackRock for lending their time to wrap gifts; Publix Super Markets Charities for providing bicycles that brought extra smiles; and Macy's and The Whitehead Foundation for sponsoring this joyous occasion. Your support made the season brighter for so many!

**191  
FAMILIES**

**728  
INDIVIDUALS**

**97%  
SPONSORSHIP**





# Jean Childs Young RESILIENCE FUND for women & children

On April 25, 2024, the Families First Board of Directors unanimously voted to establish the Jean Childs Young Resilience Fund for Women and Children. This fund was created as a passion project of former board chair Lucy Vance, honoring her friendship with former board member Jean Childs Young. The Fund supports Families First Navigators working with single mothers who struggle with complex challenges.

In April 2025, the Jean Childs Young Community Empowerment Baby Shower invited the community to participate in the Fund while educating and empowering attendees. Guests generously donated diapers, wipes, and baby items to support single mothers served by Navigator Services.



Andrea Young, the eldest daughter of Jean Childs Young and Resilience Fund Committee Member, moderated a powerful Expert Panel Q&A of four distinguished voices:

**Dr. Heather Hirsch, MD, MPH**  
Emory Pediatric Hospital  
Medicine Fellow PGY-4

**Dr. LeKeisha D. Jackson, PhD**  
Senior Advisor and Senior Research  
Associate, Georgia Health Policy  
Center - Andrew Young School of  
Policy Studies, Georgia State University

**Troya Jackson, LCSW**  
Families First Director  
of Navigator Services

**Dr. Diana Wilson**  
OBGYN, HEALing  
Community Health

Together, their insights inspired thoughtful discussion and action around strengthening family resiliency for single mothers.



To date,  
Families First has raised  
**\$21,294**  
toward the Jean Childs  
Young Resilience Fund.

## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!



**Brian & Zayani  
Mandigo**



**Lucy C. Vance**

**Marcia & John  
Donnell**

**Camelia Rose  
Chapter of the Links, Inc.**

**Bernadette  
Hartfield**



# Endowment Scholarship Awards

## KNESHARA

Kneshara's journey to resilience began with unimaginable loss. On April 24, 2021, just two days after her daughter's birthday, she received devastating news that her children's father had been killed in a car accident. As she reflects, "Despite the emotional, uncontrollable chaos, I knew I had to be resilient for my children. They needed me to be strong during this heartbreak time."

Through her faith and family support, Kneshara drew strength to create stability for her children amid the grief. The constant struggle of living paycheck to paycheck, with the endless threat of eviction weighing on her mind, motivated her to seek a career that could provide true financial security for her family.

Working with her Families First Navigator, Kneshara identified the trucking industry as a pathway to break free from the cycle of poverty. Families First

was excited to award Kneshara the **Carol Dunlap Reiser and Cox Mary Beth Leamer Scholarships** to support her Commercial Driver's License training at 160 Driving Academy, where she's learning not only essential driving skills but also time management, route planning, and vehicle maintenance.

Her vision extends beyond personal financial stability. Kneshara shares, **"As a dedicated single mom, I strive to create a nurturing environment where my children can be successful emotionally, academically, and socially."** Through continuous learning and resilience, she's building the foundation for her family's brighter future!

## PRINCESS

Princess exemplifies resilience and determination. After growing up as one of fourteen siblings in foster care, she came to Families First at age 18 during one of the darkest periods of her life. Initially reluctant and guarded, Princess gradually learned to trust her dedicated Navigator team, who connected her with the resources and skills she needed to build stability for herself and her family.



Today, Princess is a senior at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, pursuing her Bachelor of Social Work—a field that speaks directly to her lived experience. When her Families First Navigator encouraged her to apply for the **Karen Sibley Scholarship**, the award became instrumental in helping her complete her

undergraduate degree in just three years. While maintaining a full course load and completing 200 internship hours per semester, she works full-time as a housing case manager at the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, managing a caseload of 70 clients across Georgia.

Despite facing significant challenges—including a recent apartment fire, health complications, and caring for her 7-year-old son with autism and 1-year-old daughter—Princess remains focused on her goals. She will graduate in May 2025 and immediately enter the Social Work Master's program with advanced standing.

Princess's ultimate vision includes establishing a nonprofit to develop housing vouchers for foster youth and pursuing policy work to improve the foster care system. Her transformation from a mistrustful teenager to a passionate advocate exemplifies the impact of believing in our clients' potential, and Families First can't wait to see what she accomplishes next!



# Volunteers Deliver Impact

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to every single one of our dedicated volunteers. Your time, energy, and compassion make an incredible impact in the lives of those we serve.

Look what we accomplished together:



Distributed  
**800 backpacks**  
with school supplies

Fulfilled holiday wish lists for  
**191 families**,  
impacting 728 individuals



**200 volunteers**  
provided **777 hours**  
**of service**  
to our clients

Your time, energy, and heart transformed moments of need into opportunities for hope and resilience.



## Want to Get Involved?

Join our growing community of changemakers.  
Sign up to volunteer and make a lasting impact today.



Thank you to the organizations who volunteered with us in FY25:

**Anisa International**

**BlackRock**

**Families First Board**

**GA State University**

**Genuine Parts**

**Kroger**

**South College**

**Starbucks**

**TruRating**



# Families First

80 Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30314

## A final word of thanks from Imani, a participant in our TeenAge Pregnant and Parenting Program

"I truly appreciate Families First and Ms. Michelle Brock for supporting my decision to keep my son and push through high school to graduate. The organization has provided me with essentials like diapers, wipes, clothes, and toys, and has given me the opportunity to bond with other moms and children. It is a beautiful sight to see everyone happy when we come together, and I hope to continue being part of an impact like this that uplifts moms of all ages and backgrounds."



**TOGETHER WE  
CAN STRENGTHEN  
FAMILY RESILIENCY!**

**FamiliesFirst.org**

**Social Handles**

-  @familiesfirstatl
-  Families First
-  Families First

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(404) 853-2800

**Email**  
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