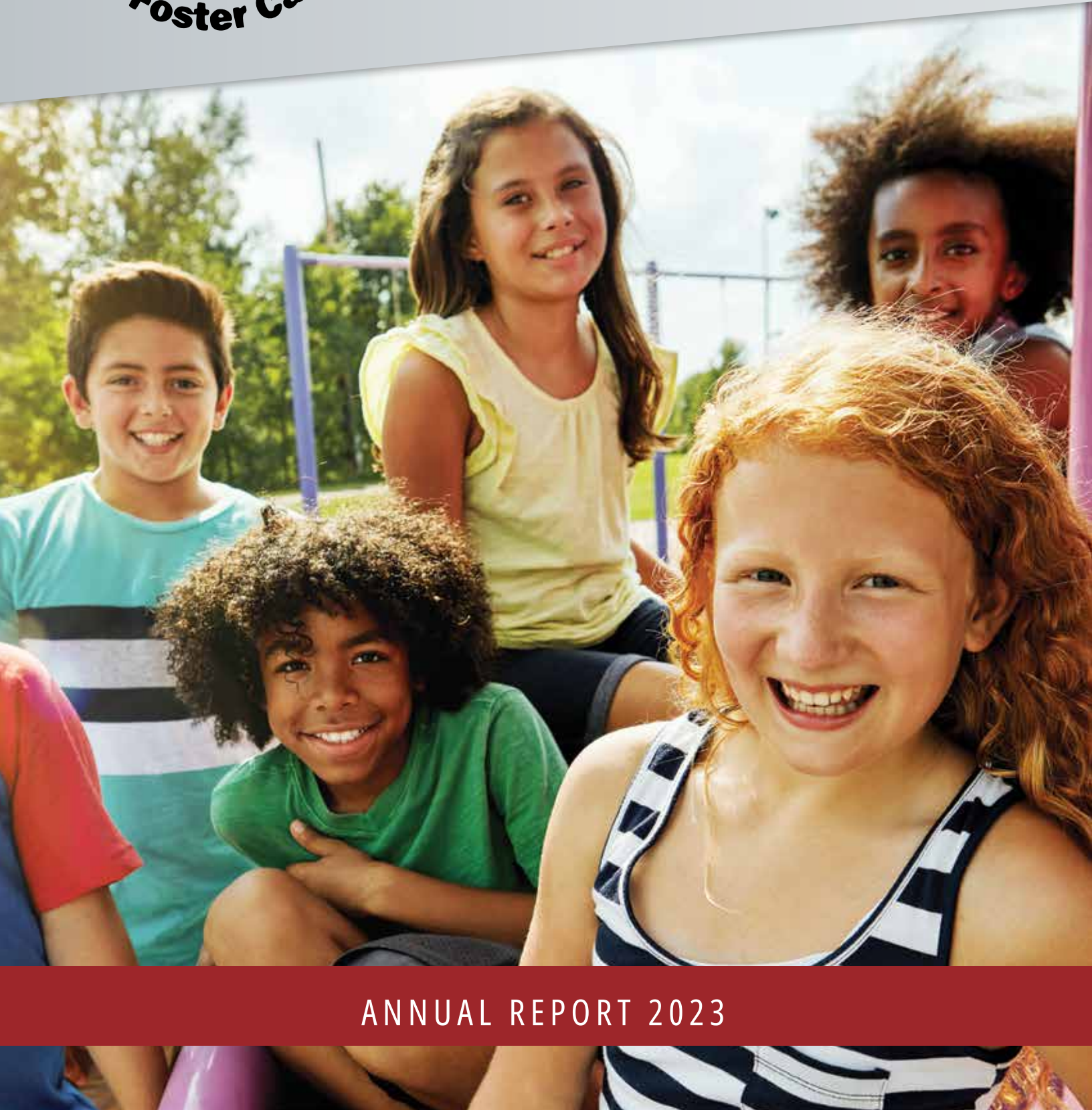




Tidewater Friends of Foster Care



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Tidewater Friends of Foster Care

Organization Overview

Our Mission

To create opportunities and environments for foster youth and their families to thrive.

Our Vision

To be the most innovative, valuable and inclusive partner in creating community-based support for youth and families in the foster care system

Our Values

We find a way to say “Yes” to those in need and build on the strengths of those we serve.

We are solution oriented with a commitment to integrity, excellence, inclusivity, diversity, and accountability.

We take holistic approaches with measurable and lasting impacts.

We deliver on our commitments with compassion, respect, and humility.

Our Goals

To ensure every child has a loving family placement capable of meeting their emotional, physical, and psychological needs—through targeted outreach and training initiatives for foster parents.

To eliminate placement disruption and systemic recidivism within the foster care system—through comprehensive, on-going support of youth and families across all realms of the child welfare system.

To improve long-term outcomes of youth involved in the foster care system—through steadfast and strategic investment in enrichment programs that bridge gaps between publicly available resources and those elements essential to a healthy, happy and rewarding childhood.

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LETTER *from the* CEO



Audra Bullock
CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we embark on 2024, I am filled with gratitude and a deep sense of pride in the strides we have made at Tidewater Friends of Foster Care in our mission to serve foster and at-risk youth. It is an honor to share some of our collective achievements and express our heartfelt thanks to the community that has made it all possible.

This year, through the dedicated efforts of our team and the unwavering support of our compassionate donors, partners and friends, we have achieved significant milestones in transforming the lives of young individuals facing adversity. In 2023, we served 1200 foster youth, 546 at-risk or underserved youth, and touched more than 700 families with our programming. We invested \$1.3M in creating opportunities and environments for children and families to thrive. We are elated to report that this year we have served more youth than ever before and have witnessed incredible outcomes including, the most seniors to graduate high-school, the best collective academic performance to date, the largest program service participation in our history, and over a 50% increase in program participant persistence over the prior year. These accomplishments underscore the real and tangible impact that your generosity and compassion have had on the youth we serve.

At Tidewater Friends of Foster Care, our commitment extends beyond providing immediate assistance; we are devoted to fostering long-term empowerment. Our enrichment programs, educational initiatives, and community engagement efforts have not only equipped youth with essential life skills but have also nurtured a sense of resilience and hope. The ripple effect of your support is evident in the stories of triumph and the dreams rekindled in the hearts of those who were once marginalized.

Your belief in our mission has been the cornerstone of our success. We recognize that your contributions extend beyond financial support; they represent a shared vision for a brighter, more equitable future. It is through your commitment that we can continue to break down barriers and create pathways for success for every young person we encounter.

As we embark on the journey ahead, we remain steadfast in our dedication to expanding our reach and enhancing the quality of our programs. Your ongoing support will be instrumental in realizing our vision of a world where every youth, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you who has played a role, big or small, in our shared mission. Your support is an investment in the potential and future of the remarkable young individuals we are privileged to serve.

Thank you for being the driving force behind our success. Together, we are truly making a difference.

With sincere appreciation,

Audra Bullock

CEO, Tidewater Friends of Foster Care

OUR BOARD & OFFICERS

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Chuck Gray

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MSW, The Up Center, Norfolk

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Melvin Roy

Foster Care Alum and Founder of
Foster U



The State of Foster Care

Foster care is a vital system that provides temporary homes and support for children who cannot remain with their families due to issues such as abuse, neglect, or parental inability to care for them adequately. As of the latest available data, there are just over 5000 children in Virginia's foster care system. This number represents the children who have been placed in the care of foster families or group homes as a result of factors compromising their safety and well-being. While this number is concerning, it is crucial to understand the reasons behind their entry into the foster care system to be able to address the root causes effectively. By examining the population of children in care, the reasons for their entry, the length of their stays, and the outcomes upon exiting care, we gain insight to inform our programming for the future.

The primary reasons for children entering foster care in Virginia include neglect, abuse, parental substance abuse, parental incarceration, and parental death. Neglect is the leading factor, accounting for over 50% of foster care placements. This underlines the urgent need for interventions and support services aimed at preventing neglect and strengthening families in order to minimize the number of children who require placement in foster care. Often there are multiple factors that lead to neglect, but most frequently it is a lack of adequate family resources that contributes to a child entering foster care. This is something that as a community we can and should address, because the long-term repercussions of the foster care system on children can be grave and costly. Up to 80% of youth in foster care have significant mental health issues as compared to approximately 22% of youth in the general population. Children in foster care also have significantly higher mean physical and behavioral health care costs than those of the overall Medicaid child population—as much as 40% more than their non-foster care peers.

As a means of intervention, Tidewater Friends of Foster Care has begun providing our services to children and families before the need for foster care arises. We do this in partnership with Child Protective Services and Communities in Schools, who identify youth that need additional supports. The prevailing body of research on long-term outcomes shows that children do better when they can be maintained within their family of origin. By working to keep families intact, we are minimizing the detrimental elements of being placed in foster care and helping to lessen the burden on the system as a whole. Foster care is an effective tool to maintain safety of a child, however, that safety does come at an emotional cost, particularly when children remain separated from their families for long periods of time.

Length of stay in foster care is a significant factor impacting the well-being of children. Ideally, the goal is to reunite children with their families as soon as it is feasible and safe. However, if reunification is not possible, other permanency options such as adoption or guardianship are pursued, which can lead to longer times in care. The average length of stay in foster care in Virginia is 20 months. While efforts have been made to reduce this duration and expedite permanency by addressing barriers and providing necessary resources, it is essential to ensure transitions to permanency are safe and lasting for children. To help address this, Tidewater Friends of Foster Care assists in two key ways: (1) by providing emergency needs funding to help families meet

the requirements of reunification and (2) by providing our full complement of services for up to 2 years after a child exits foster care, whether that be to their birth family or an adoptive family. Through these initiatives, we are helping to expedite permanent solutions for children and families, while bolstering their stability.

Another significant factor impacting the well-being of children in foster care, is the number of placements they have while in care. In Virginia, over 45% of children have 3 or more placements while in foster care, with 20% of foster youth having 5 or more placements. The constant movement of children within the foster care system inflicts a profound and lasting detriment on their well-being. Each relocation not only disrupts a child's sense of stability and security but also fragments vital connections with caregivers, peers, and educators. The transient nature of their living arrangements hampers the establishment of consistent relationships, hindering the development of trust and emotional bonds crucial for healthy growth.

Moreover, frequent changes in schools can impede academic progress, exacerbating the already considerable challenges these youth face. The detrimental impact of this instability is not merely immediate; it resonates in the long term, affecting their mental health, self-esteem, and ability to form lasting connections. In fact, 90% of foster youth with 5 or more placements encounter the criminal justice system. That is why in every program that we offer at TFFC, stability is the core tenet. We are striving to create a more stable and supportive foster care environment to help mitigate the enduring harm caused by constant upheaval.

The outcomes for children exiting foster care in Virginia vary depending on the stability and support they receive during their time in care. The ultimate aim is to create permanent, loving homes that enable these children to thrive. Currently, around 28% of children exiting foster care in Virginia are reunited with their parents and just under 20% are placed permanently with a relative. This reunification indicates successful efforts to address the causes that led to their placement and provide necessary services to families so they can remain intact. For children who cannot be safely reunited with their families, adoption becomes the next desired outcome. Adoption offers children a stable and nurturing environment to grow and thrive. In Virginia, approximately 30% of children exiting foster care find permanent homes through adoption. Adoption is not the end of the strife from the difficult journey through foster care, though. For many children, struggles with loss and grief persist for years, as does the need for ongoing support. That's why TFFC has expanded our programming for adopted children, to continue our support during the years after adoption is finalized and help strengthen the entire family for the long term.

While the goal is always to achieve permanency in a family setting, it is notable that as much as 20% of children in foster care emancipate or age out of the system each year. Aging out refers to children reaching the age of maturity without finding permanent homes or a support system. This can lead to adverse outcomes, such as higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, and lower educational attainment. One in five youth who emancipate from the foster care system report experiencing homelessness between ages 17 and 19, and as much as 29% report being homeless from 19 to 21. To address this, Virginia has implemented programs and support services to assist youth in transitioning to independent living successfully, but there is much more to be done in this space. That is why TFFC has expanded our service eligibility indefinitely for youth who have aged out of foster care. We are there for them when they need us! With this we demonstrate our commitment to supporting youth on their journey to thriving beyond aging out of the foster care system.

By actively providing support services aimed at strengthening families before children enter foster care, we are helping families stay intact. Through supporting children while in the foster care and after exiting the system, we are working to help improve the overall outcomes of Virginia's foster care system. We are prioritizing interventions as well as services after reunification and adoption, to ensure that children successfully maintain permanency with family and have a better future. Through continued efforts, collaboration, and community support, we can ensure that the state's most vulnerable children receive the stability, care, and love they deserve.



Our Program Updates

TUTORING

Foster youth face significant challenges when it comes to their educational outcomes. Sadly, they often experience some of the poorest academic results in the nation. In Virginia, only 2 out of 3 youth involved in the foster care system (62%) graduate high school—this compares to a general graduation rate of 92% for all students and a homeless graduation rate of 77% (VA, 2023). By 3rd grade, most foster youth are already one grade level behind in reading and by 11th grade, only 1 out of 5 is proficient in reading and math. With the right academic support, these outcomes can be changed and foster youth can perform on par with or better than their non-foster-care peers. This is our mission and the proven outcome of our tutoring program.

Tidewater Friends of Foster Care is dedicated to making a difference by providing one-on-one, in-home academic support to help these students succeed. We hire the very best instructors, who curate individualized educational support plans and work with students in their homes, so they can establish strong studying skills independent of the classroom environment. Our tutors are highly-qualified, professional educators, contracted competitively to guarantee that our students are getting the best educational services with accountability—our goal is to ensure that our tutors lend not only to academic progress, but also the overall stability of the lives of the children we serve.

We tutor all subjects and grade levels from Pre-K through College, including vocational studies and GED. This support is provided up to 4 hours per week during the school year and up to 6 hours per week over the summer. This program is supported through donations and foundation grants and is provided at no cost to the family or social service agency. We continue to provide our tutoring services to youth even after they have exited foster care for as long as they need academic support.

Through our one-on-one instruction approach, we have witnessed remarkable transformations in the students enrolled in our tutoring program. Not only have we seen improved graduation rates among these youth, but more importantly, we have witnessed a boost in their self-confidence, an expansion of their aspirations, and a collective improvement in their academic performance.

By offering this individualized instruction, we address the specific learning gaps and provide personalized support that foster youth may not receive elsewhere. This targeted approach helps them thrive academically and empowers them to reach their full potential. Our commitment to bridging the educational gap for foster youth goes beyond just academic success. We understand that education plays a crucial role in shaping their future opportunities and overall well-being. By investing in their education through our tutoring program and by providing post-secondary scholarships, we are giving these young individuals a chance at a brighter future.

We are so grateful for all our supporters who have joined us as we make a lasting impact on foster youth's lives by providing them with the tools and support they need to succeed academically. Together, we are creating a path towards improved educational outcomes, increased graduation rates, and enhanced self-confidence for these deserving individuals.

How did our students do in the 2022-23 Academic Year?

Names of the students have been changed to protect their identity

THIS YEAR WAS OUR BEST REPORT CARD EVER!

268 Students

Received 1 or more hours of tutoring

8600 Hours

of instruction with students

250 Students (93%) persisted in the program for at least 4 sessions

96%

Promoted

93%

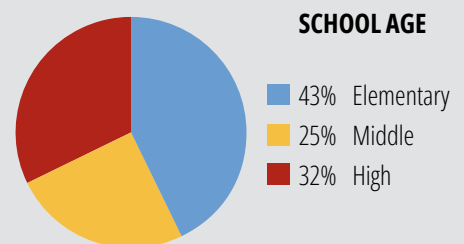
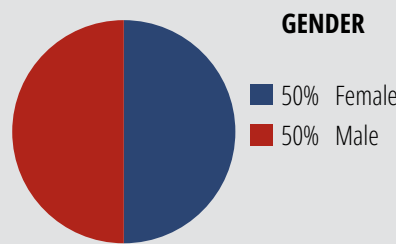
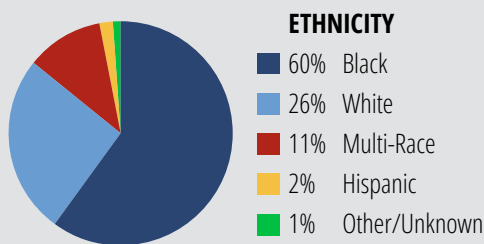
Passed all tutored classes

85%

Passed every class

100%

Seniors graduated early or on-time



Chris is in first grade and loves school now!

Remarks from Chris' Tutor, Rachel: Chris is a wonderful little boy, who has a great deal of potential. When I first met him, he didn't know more than 5 Capital letters. Before he left in December, he knew all his Capital letters, most lowercase letters, and about 10 sight words. He was able to count to 19 before needing assistance to remember how to change over to the next 10. He could also count by 10s and could understand how to add and subtract 1-digit numbers. I built a strong rapport with Chris, he improved his basic readiness skills, and went from hating anything to do with school to loving school.

Aliyah is 18 years old and is now a high-school graduate!

Remarks from Aliyah's Tutor, Carmen: Beginning in January, Aliyah did not know how to study, she was complacent with her success in math, and was not optimistic of her future grades. By April, Aliyah was able to complete research assignments without assistance, and had begun grasping concepts during math class. Aliyah was a great client, she was very willing to learn and put in practice suggestions to improve her grades. Aliyah graduated and has plans to pursue a license in cosmetology. She also received a \$1000 TFFC Scholarship to help succeed in her post-secondary plans.

A Big Thank You to Our Tutoring Program Champions

Champion Sponsors provide a full year of tutoring for one or more students in our tutoring program. Thank you to our Tutoring Program Champion Sponsors! Together with all of our tutoring supporters, you have changed the lives of our students for the better and we are grateful!

Atlantic Bay Mortgage
Richard Litton & Audra Bullock
James & Karen Sparks
Mark Sheggeby & Kristin Sparks
Dan & Tracy Keller
Ashley Rose & Lane Shea
Robert & Alicia Friedman
Joseph & Keeshia Newman
Lewis & Kim Webb
Joseph & Carla Stoner
Bank of America Charitable Foundation

The City of Norfolk
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, Hampton Roads Community Foundation
Louis & Mary Haddad Foundation
Wawa Foundation
Dollar Bank
Priority Automotive Charities
Langley for Families Foundation
Southeast Virginia Community Foundation, Portsmouth Service League
The Suffolk Foundation



COLLEGE TOURS FOR FOSTER YOUTH

This year, in partnership with the Joe Lee Hansley Foundation, 15 of our highschoolers embarked on a group college tour of universities across Georgia and South Carolina. Foster youth experienced not only the thrill of exploring potential academic pursuits but also the empowering sense of possibility. The journey was more than just visits to campuses; it became a transformative exploration of dreams and aspirations and included a fun-filled evening at a Braves game! Navigating the historic halls and vibrant campuses, these resilient young individuals were exposed to a world of opportunities. The group dynamic fostered a supportive environment, allowing them to share aspirations, exchange stories, and envision a future defined by education and personal growth. As they walked the campuses, listened to lectures, and absorbed the unique atmosphere of each institution, the college tour ignited a spark of hope and ambition, affirming that higher education is not just a distant dream but a tangible goal well within reach.

OUTREACH



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Keeping the pipeline full of loving, available foster homes is more important than ever. Even several years later, it remains complicated by the pandemic's impact on children and families, both from the perspective of a general decrease in the capacity of families to step up to foster, and in the challenging behaviors of children entering care from isolation and lack of social development during the pandemic. Children are clearly struggling and so are the parents who care for them. TFFC works hard to recruit, train and support those individuals who raise their hand to foster a child. We also are supporting families of origin to help prevent entry or re-entry into foster care.

This year's Foster Care Aware event was centered around training to equip those working in the field of child welfare, as well as those who foster or are thinking about fostering, with tools that can help improve outcomes for youth in foster care. We partnered with the ATTACH organization and Old Dominion University to create a 2-day symposium that provided top-notch training focusing on trauma-informed parenting and the importance of attachment for children with trauma histories.

Old Dominion University very generously opened their campus to host this year's Foster Care Aware event, where we held educational lectures, a vendor fair, family fun activities, a children's playland, and immersive sensory tools for healing trauma. Day one was geared for professionals—social workers, clinicians, and educators—and day two was geared for parents and families. Informative lectures were held for both groups on attachment, trauma-related behaviors in children, and Trust Based Relational Intervention—a model of care developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at TCU that works on bolstering secure attachments. The symposium was very successful in bringing a vast array of individuals together to share information and best practices within the foster care system.

On the recruiting side, this event provided information on becoming a foster parent and dovetailed into our Prospective Parent Program—a program that helps guide people through the decision process of becoming a foster parent, providing the emotional support and accountability needed to succeed throughout the process. Through our Prospective Parent Program, parents join a community where they learn skills and tools to help them navigate the system, choose a licensing agency, and connect with other people on similar journeys.

The purpose is to educate parents on the rewards and challenges associated with foster parenting, while supporting them with access to professionals and existing foster parents to help inform and answer questions. Prospective parents are also paired with a personal coach so they can talk through their concerns and fears as they move forward with becoming foster parents. Through providing comprehensive training programs, and offering ongoing support like this, we are working to ensure that every child in need has access to a safe and nurturing environment.

Extracurricular activities for foster youth offer a multitude of benefits that go beyond just having fun. These activities provide a healthy outlet for stress relief, allowing young individuals to unwind and recharge. Engaging in extracurriculars offers children the opportunity to explore new interests, develop life skills and interact with their peers, fostering social connections and enhancing their social skills. Through teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, they learn valuable lessons that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Additionally, research has shown a positive correlation between involvement in extracurricular activities and academic performance. Foster youth who participate in these activities often demonstrate improved focus, time management skills, and discipline—all of which contribute to better performance in the classroom. In fact, studies have even suggested that youth engaged in extracurriculars tend to achieve higher scores on standardized tests such as the SAT.

TFFC is proud to support extracurricular activities for youth in foster care and to date has sponsored

over 1005 separate activities for 463 kids of all ages. From gymnastics to martial arts, and cooking to drum lessons, we've helped foster kids engage in healthy and enriching activities that will benefit them over the long run. In 2023 we supported 235 activities for 135 youth!

As an extension of the amazing benefits that extracurriculars have for our youth, TFFC supports YMCA membership for our youth, families and social workers. Through providing Y memberships, we are making a commitment to fostering holistic well-being for the entire foster care system. YMCA members have access to a myriad of benefits that promote physical health, social connectivity, and personal growth. With access to state-of-the-art fitness facilities, families can embark on a journey towards active living, engaging in a variety of exercise programs suitable for all ages. The YMCA's commitment to community shines through its family-oriented activities and events, providing a platform for bonding and creating lasting memories. The Y is not just a place to exercise; it's a hub for educational resources, childcare services, and character development programs.

We provide these memberships in partnership with the YMCAs of South Hampton Roads, the Virginia Peninsulas, and new this year, the YMCAs of Greater Richmond. This year TFFC sponsored 353 YMCA family memberships for foster youth, social workers and their family members; all told supporting YMCA membership for over 1000 individuals.

We are eternally grateful to our YMCA partners, and all their amazing supporter. The Y's investment in the overall well-being of each family member we serve is fostering a dynamic and thriving foster care community!



Praise for the 'Y'



I am so grateful to you and the community partners that made YMCA membership possible. I never really knew what the YMCA offered, but since becoming a member it has been an awesome experience. I never thought about water aerobics or taking swimming lessons. I absolutely love it and I will continue to use my membership.

*Thank you,
Relissa P. (Social Worker)*



GIFTING PROGRAMS



In the spirit of generosity, providing holiday and birthday gifts for foster and at-risk children can make a significant impact on their lives. These gifts not only bring joy and excitement to their special occasions but also serve as a reminder that they are valued and cared for, even in challenging times. For children in foster care who are away from their families during these celebrations, receiving thoughtful gifts can help alleviate some of the pain and loneliness they feel. The TFFC Gifting Program is an opportunity to create positive memories and experiences that can make time in foster care a little easier to manage.

Additionally, our Gifting Program can play a crucial role in teaching children the importance of giving back. By celebrating special occasions with gifts for children in need, we not only bring moments of happiness into their lives but also nurture their understanding of generosity and the significance of supporting one another during difficult times.

In 2023 we had 575 sponsors and donors who helped us celebrate birthdays and holidays for 1050 foster youth and 546 at-risk youth, fulfilling 2190 wish lists for a grand total of nearly \$215,000 in gifts provided. This was a year that truly filled our hearts with joy to have touched so many children in such a meaningful and personal way. Together, we are making a difference by showing these deserving children that they are not alone on their journey.

We send a BIG THANKS to our Friends at Atlantic Union Bank, who donated space at Dominion Tower for this year's Holiday Project, where presents were stacked floor to ceiling and wall to wall for all the youth we serve. It was a sight to behold!

We are eternally grateful to all of the sponsors, volunteers, donors and social workers who took part in the 2023 Gifting Program and made the holidays merry and birthdays special for over 700 families through their benevolence! From funding, purchasing, wrapping, organizing and delivering these gifts, our supporters made a tremendous impact in the community we serve. The children and families benefiting from this project are incredibly appreciative of this warm generosity.



CAMPS

Summer camps play a crucial role in providing foster youth with normative experiences that they may not have had the opportunity to enjoy otherwise. Camps offer a sense of belonging and community, allowing foster youth to connect with their peers and create lasting friendships. One of the key benefits of summer camps for foster youth is the opportunity to feel like a “regular” kid again. In their everyday lives, foster youth may often feel singled out or stigmatized due to their circumstances. However, at summer camps, they are able to blend in with other campers and simply be kids, free from judgment or preconceived notions.

Moreover, camps provide a much-needed outlet for fun and stress relief—and a welcomed respite for parents too! Foster youth often face unique challenges and high levels of stress in their lives. Attending a camp allows them to temporarily escape from these pressures and engage in recreational activities that promote joy, laughter, and personal growth.

Through experiences such as swimming, hiking, arts and crafts, team sports, and campfire gatherings, camps help foster youth develop essential life skills while promoting a sense of independence and self-confidence. And to help make sure that kids who exit foster care still have an opportunity to benefit from all of these enriching experiences, we extended our camp eligibility to cover the summer a child exits foster care, plus the next year too!

In 2023, we sent kids to a record number of camps and they loved it! Through the incredible support of our generous donors, TFFC sponsored 578 camp sessions for 138 campers at 39 different camps across the state—that’s a 51% increase from 2022, which was also a record breaker for us. Campers got to experience overnight and day camps including Camp Silver Beach, Camp Red Feather, Art Camp, Paddleboard Camp, Volleyball Camp, and many, many more.

We send a special thanks to the Philbin Family and the E. C. Warehiem Foundation for sponsoring so many of our kids to attend the best camps in Virginia—the true joy these camps have created is remarkable!



New Partnerships & Programs

This year we expanded our collaborations with social service partners to include Gloucester and Mathews Counties, as well as the City of Richmond! This marks a significant stride towards extending crucial support systems to Central Virginia's foster youth. We also partnered with the YMCA of Greater Richmond to help provide access to the incredible benefits this organization brings to bear.

The dynamic collaboration between Tidewater Friends of Foster Care, the YMCA of Greater Richmond, and the Richmond City Department of Human Services marks a significant stride towards extending crucial support systems to Central Virginia's foster youth. Recognizing the profound impact of community partnerships, this initiative aims to leverage the collective strengths of each organization to create a more comprehensive and inclusive network of services. By joining forces with the YMCA, a cornerstone in promoting community well-being, and the Richmond City Department of Human Services, which plays a vital role in child welfare, Tidewater Friends of Foster Care is poised to broaden its reach and deepen its impact on the lives of vulnerable youth in Central Virginia.

Expanding our services towards Central Virginia is not merely about geographic outreach; it's a commitment to addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by foster youth in this region. By forging partnerships with organizations deeply embedded in the local community, we can tailor our programs to the specific dynamics and nuances of Central Virginia. This collaboration signifies a shared dedication to providing essential resources, mentorship, and a supportive community for foster youth in the heart of the state, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment that transcends geographic boundaries. Together, we strive to create a brighter and more hopeful future for every child in foster care in Central Virginia.

We send our deepest gratitude to our YMCA Friends and Family for making such an impactful investment in our community's wellbeing.



Special Events

2023 GALA

The 2023 Foster Care Aware Gala was an enchanting and heartwarming event, and for us was a beacon of hope and support for the often-overlooked youth navigating the complexities of the foster care system. This annual gathering is not just a celebration of philanthropy but a testament to the collective commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of these resilient young individuals. The gala provided a platform for advocates, donors, and community members to come together in an atmosphere of elegance and compassion. Amidst the glittering lights and stylish attire, the true stars of the evening were the foster youth, whose stories of triumph and resilience took center stage. From beautifully created art to inspiring speeches, the Foster Care Aware Gala was the perfect opportunity to raise awareness, generate crucial funds, and foster a sense of unity in the mission to create brighter futures for those who need it most. It was a night of inspiration and delight! Thank you to our 2023 Gala Attendees, it takes a village, and we are so glad to have you as part of ours.

ART FROM THE HEART



2023 First Place Award
Pieza de Alegria (Piece of Joy) by Sury

The Art From the Heart event in August was an incredible occasion that beautifully wove together the talents of foster youth and the wisdom of senior citizens through the universal language of art. This unique gathering that was a collaboration between Tidewater Arts Outreach and TFFC served as a testament to the power of intergenerational connections and the healing qualities of creative expression. In a warm and collaborative atmosphere, foster youth and seniors joined forces to craft original artworks, blending youthful enthusiasm and the seasoned insights of age. The event not only provided a platform for artistic exploration but also fostered meaningful connections, breaking down generational barriers and fostering a sense of mutual understanding. As canvases filled with vibrant colors and poignant strokes, so too did the space resonate with shared stories and the joyous harmony of diverse life experiences converging into a tapestry of creativity. The Art From the Heart event stands as a shining example of the profound impact that art can have in bridging generations and creating a space where everyone, regardless of age or background, can contribute to a collaborative masterpiece of shared humanity.



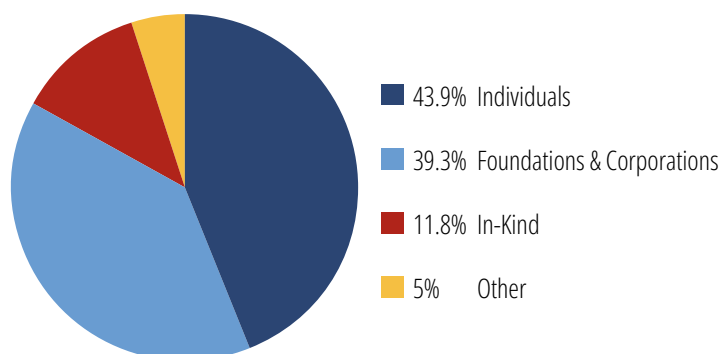
Development & Investment

Through the generous contribution of donors, sponsors and supporters, TFFC has invested \$4.5M in improving outcomes for the foster youth of our community since our founding in 2016. Aligned with our mission, we have made strategic investments to create meaningful and lasting impacts in the lives of foster children and the families who care for them. We are committed to ensuring that every child served receives the very best services, with the most efficient use of resources possible.

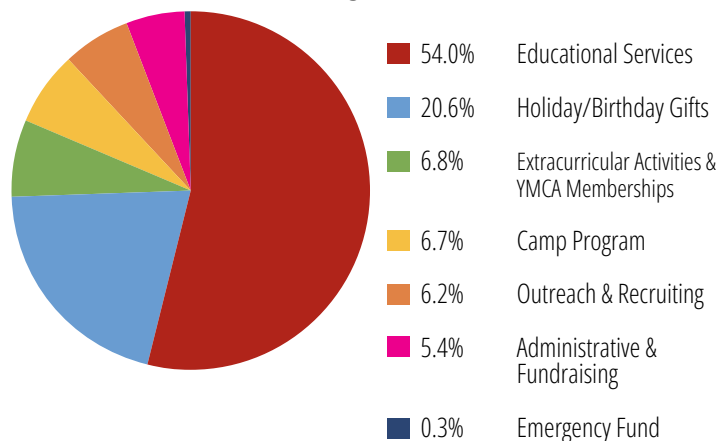
Our on-going commitment is that for every dollar donated to TFFC, we invest at least 90% in programs that directly benefit foster youth, and to date, we have lived up to that promise! We maintain a high-level of investment efficiency through automated workflow processes, a robust database management system, and by relying on volunteers and community partnerships to keep our administrative costs as low as possible. As we continue to grow and expand our geographic service regions, we are committed to keeping our pledge of efficacy and efficiency in making a difference for foster youth and their families.

Through the generosity of our supporters—corporate, foundation, individual and in-kind—and through our Tutoring For All business line, we have been able to provide these essential resources and programs to children in need, bringing about positive change and making a difference in the lives of countless individuals in our community.

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Please contact Tidewater Friends of Foster Care Development Office at 757-227-4187 for corrections.

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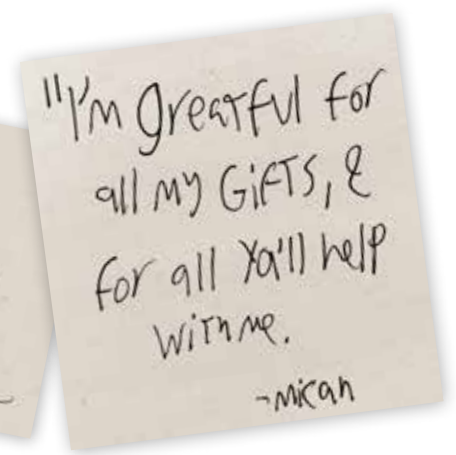
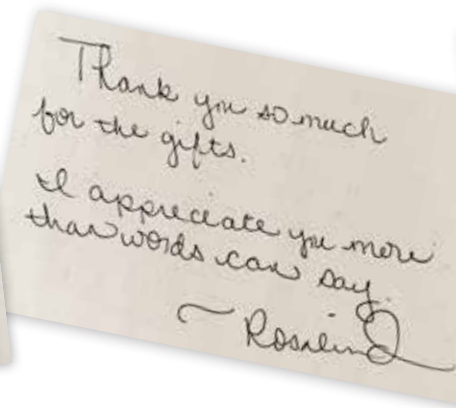
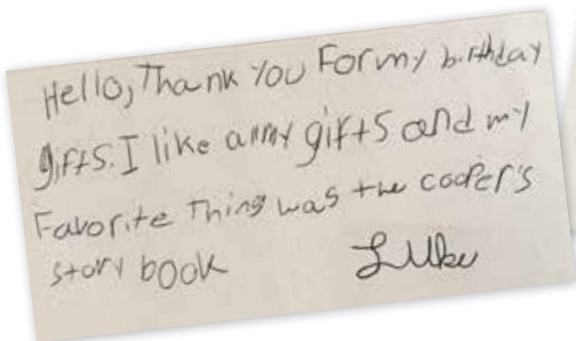


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Outlook *for the* Future

As we look to the future, we stand at the threshold of exciting opportunities and continued growth at TFFC. The coming year promises to be a transformative chapter in our journey to serve foster and at-risk youth, and we are eager to share our outlook for the months ahead.

1. Expansion of Reach and Impact: In the upcoming year, we are dedicated to broadening our reach to ensure that our programs and services touch the lives of even more youth in need. By forging new partnerships and enhancing existing collaborations, we aim to create a more extensive support network that empowers young individuals across diverse communities.

2. Innovative Program Development: At TFFC, we understand the importance of adaptability and innovation. In the coming year, we will introduce new and innovative programs designed to address the evolving needs of foster and at-risk youth. Whether it's leveraging technology for educational support or creating mentorship and coaching models that resonate with today's youth, our commitment to cutting-edge solutions remains unwavering.

3. Emphasis on Education and Skill Building: Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of adversity. In the coming year, we will place a heightened emphasis on educational initiatives and skill-building programs. By providing broadened access to quality instruction and equipping youth with practical skills, we aspire to empower them to overcome challenges and build a foundation for future success.

4. Community Engagement and Advocacy: Our work extends beyond direct service provision; it encompasses advocacy and community engagement. In the coming year, we will actively engage with individuals and local community partners to raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by foster and at-risk youth. Through advocacy efforts, we aim to create a more supportive and inclusive environment that promotes understanding and empathy, all the while, working to recruit more loving homes to care for children in their times of need.

5. Enhanced Support Systems: Recognizing the importance of a holistic approach, we will focus on strengthening our support systems. This includes bolstering health and wellness services, expanding post-secondary coaching programs, and providing comprehensive resources to address the multifaceted needs of the youth and families we serve.

As we embark on this journey into the future, we remain deeply grateful for your continued support. Together, we can create a positive and lasting impact on the lives of foster and at-risk youth, helping them realize their full potential and shaping a future where every young person has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for being an integral part of our mission. Here's to a year of progress, resilience, and transformation.

Thank you so much for your support and encouragement! The services Tidewater has provided has truly made a difference, not just for the youth, but for the foster parents as well. We appreciate you!

Gratefully, T. F. (Foster Parent)

A big thank you to Tidewater Friends of Foster Care. Thank you for all you do. Our children were able to go to camp for 6 weeks, and they loved it. Thank you for the YMCA Memberships, birthday gifts, and Christmas gifts you have blessed our children with. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

M. M. (Foster Parent)

Praise from Parents and Workers

I just wanted to thank you for everything you have done and continue to do to support our children and families. It is not an exaggeration to say that I sing TFFC's praises to literally everyone—in the foster care community and outside of it—because your holistic approach to supporting the community is truly unmatched. I wish every area of the country had an organization as passionate, organized, dedicated, and multifaceted as you all. I have heard from kids who rave about their years at Camp Silver Beach that was made possible through you all, about foster and adoptive parents who so deeply appreciate the support with birthday and Christmas gifts. Yesterday, I had the joy of attending a “moving up” ceremony for 5th grader on my case load, and her TFFC tutor, Felicia, also came to cheer her on and brought a gift. I truly don't have words to express how deeply grateful I am for all the meaningful good that you do. You have such a heart for this work, and I just feel so blessed to have gotten to work alongside you in supporting our kids and families. Thank you for everything that you do and continue to do!

With Gratitude, Andrea A. (Social Worker)

Thank you guys so much for making my kids' Christmas. They were so happy. You guys made their Christmas so special. God bless you guys.

J. M. (Parent)

We are so appreciative of your tutoring program. It has helped our family tremendously as we try to support our foster daughter! She is excelling in her classes because of her tutor's help and dedication. We cannot say enough wonderful things about her...she is a phenomenal tutor!

T. S. (Foster Parent)

I am truly impressed by the work TFFC does with our kids. It really makes a huge impact to have all the opportunities you offer to them. Thank you again for your ongoing efforts to make their life easier.

Julieta B. (Social Worker)






WHO WE ARE...

Tidewater Friends of Foster Care (TFFC) is a charitable organization making a positive impact in the lives of foster and at-risk children in Virginia. Founded by foster parents Richard Litton and Audra Bullock in June of 2016, TFFC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, serving over 1500 children annually. Our services span homes throughout Virginia and even across state lines, with the goal of enriching the lives of as many children as possible. We partner with individuals, businesses and non-profits, and social service agencies to help facilitate access to resources that will improve outcomes for all of the foster and at-risk youth we serve.

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