



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



THEN. NOW. ALWAYS.

To you, our supporters:

As we celebrate 40 years of the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter, I am filled with gratitude and humility for the opportunity to reflect on the incredible legacy of this organization. But our legacy is not simply measured by what we have accomplished as an organization rather it is found in the lives of the children and families we have served along the way. Their stories, their resilience, and their journeys are never lost on us. They are the reason we continue this work every day.

For four decades, the Day Shelter has stood beside families facing homelessness in metro Atlanta, helping children and parents find stability, hope, and opportunity. While the challenges families face continues to evolve, so must we. We stay deeply committed to listening, learning, and responding to the needs of those at the heart of our mission — guiding each family along their own path toward long-term success.

In 2025, we continued strengthening that commitment through a focus on trauma-informed care and education. We worked intentionally to grow enrollment, expand mental health and community programming for parents, and strengthen our organization so we can serve families more effectively for years to come. Through our two-generation approach, we recognize that lasting change happens when children and caregivers are supported together — creating stronger foundations for the entire family.

None of this work is possible without partners like you. Your support ensures that families experiencing homelessness are met not only with critical services, but with dignity, compassion, and a community that believes in their future.

Thank you for standing with us throughout this journey and for helping make the Day Shelter a cornerstone of support for families in Atlanta. As we honor the past 40 years, we look forward to continuing this important work together — overcoming homelessness, one family at a time.

With gratitude,



CAMERON TURNER
Executive Director



**“Building strong communities
means building strong families.”**



40 Years of IMPACT

OUR MISSION

To break the cycle of poverty for families facing homelessness by building pathways to long-term self-sufficiency and providing quality early childhood educations.

OUR STORY

THEN

- Founded in 1986 by the Junior League of Atlanta
- Safe space for children experiencing homelessness



NOW

- Two-generation model (ECE + Family Services)
- Wraparound support



ALWAYS

- Commitment to dignity, stability, and opportunity
- A safe place where children feel supported



STRATEGIC GOALS



PURSING FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Workforce Development & Housing
- Mental Health Services
- On-going Wraparound Support



EMBRACING INNOVATION FOR STUDENTS

- Therapeutic Integration
- Enrichment Programming
- STEAM Activities



UPHOLDING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

- Quality Certification
- Community Engagement
- Growing Funding

OUR VISION

An Atlanta where homelessness is defeated and every child has a safe and nurturing home.

40 Years of IMPACT

From childcare classrooms to family therapy rooms, from meals served to milestones reached, every success is powered by the same thing: a community that refuses to let the gears stop turning.



1986

Atlanta Children's Shelter, founded as a 70th anniversary project of the Junior League of Atlanta and partnering with North Avenue Presbyterian Church, opens as an emergency day shelter providing safe, reliable care for children facing homelessness.



1989

Dr. Jacqueline Brown joined as Executive Director and, over 21 years, helped shape some of the Shelter's most defining milestones—from national accreditation to expanded programs and services for families.



1992

Developed its first specialized curriculum for children ages birth to 5 who live in homeless shelters and is asked to present at the annual conferences of the Georgia Association on Young Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



1995

Broke ground for North Avenue Presbyterian's new Vernon Broyles Ministry Center, the new home for The Shelter—marking the start of something bigger, brighter, and built just for them.



1996

Celebrated the Grand Opening of its new, expanded and improved facility, with more than 6,000 square feet and the ability to serve 40 children each day.



1997

Received the UNICEF Atlanta Jean Childs Young Child Survival Award—a powerful moment of recognition for the work happening right here in our community.



1997

Job Track program began, providing homeless parents with on-site job-seeking skills and resources.



1998

The Aftercare program began, offering a year of social work support to families who have moved into homes and are rebuilding stable lives.



2000

The Early Childhood Education program is completed and The Shelter received the rigorous National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation.



2005

In its 8th year, Job Track saw a surge of parents due to Hurricane Katrina. In response, the employment counselor position was reclassified as full time.



Atlanta Children's Shelter

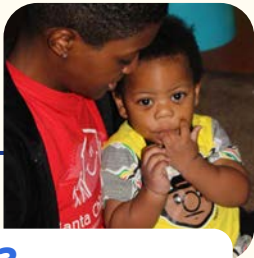
2008

The Happy House logo received a modification to clarify the mission "guiding homeless families to independence."



2010

After 21 years of service, Dr. Jacqueline Brown announces her retirement—leaving behind a legacy of compassion, vision, and unwavering commitment to families.



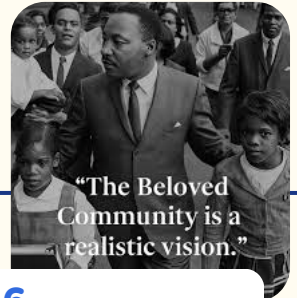
2013

New Trauma-Informed Care Training is started in conjunction with Mercer University doctoral students to increase staff awareness and responsiveness.



2015

With Bright from the Start, new inclusion services are offered to children with special needs including hearing and vision screening, behavioral intervention, and advanced individualized group play therapy.



2016

The Shelter received the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award, which is only given once every 10 years.



2020

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Shelter launched Virtual School Academy which provided services to students from kindergarten through 5th grade.



Atlanta Children's Day Shelter

2024

The Shelter became Atlanta Children's Day Shelter to help clarify the day services provided to families. The new logo features two gears with happy faces which represents the two-generation approach and the joy found through family togetherness.



2026

Our Pre-K class marked our 40th anniversary with a special field trip to the capitol—meeting Governor Brian Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp.

HONORED AT THE GEORGIA STATE CAPITOL

During the 2026 session, the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter was recognized by both the Georgia House and Senate through resolutions honoring 40 years of service to children and families across Atlanta. These recognitions reflect the lasting impact of our mission and the collective support of a community committed to helping every child thrive.

Our Pre-K students visit allowed them to explore the halls of government and experience firsthand the possibilities that lie ahead for them.

2025 IMPACT



\$2.6M

in total donations received

632

Child Mental Health &
Parent Coaching Sessions

90%

Teacher Retention
Consistent teachers build
trust, stability, and growth

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

50% of our children are meeting or exceeding expectations in cognitive & physical development

66% of our children are meeting or exceeding expectations in mathematics

& Expanded therapy services for children

68% increased enrollment
68% over the last 12 months

53 children served in our
early education and
S2S program

76% clients employed or
receiving further
education

90% clients
housed

FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM

- Improved enrollment procedures with a trauma-informed approach while breaking down barriers
- New parent engagement policy to focus on the hard work each parent is doing each month
- 100% SNAP support during the November pause
- Formalized annual engagement calendar, expanding opportunities for connection and education
- Initiatives include Parent Pod, the launch of Support Space (an adult mental health group), and monthly parent workshops

HOLIDAY HOUSE 2025

379 families
shopped

300+ volunteers
utilized

1,288 children
served

Holiday House is our annual toy and gift distribution event serving Atlanta Children's Day Shelter families and the families from our trusted community partners.



2025 Highlights



Excellence in Early Childhood Education

This year, Atlanta Children's Day Shelter achieved Georgia's highest distinction for early learning programs by earning a 3-Star Quality Rated designation. This recognition reflects our commitment to providing children with a safe, nurturing, and high-quality learning environment through exceptional teacher-child interactions, strong family engagement, and evidence-based educational practices.

For the children and families we serve, this achievement means access to the highest standard of early childhood education—helping ensure every child enters kindergarten ready to learn, grow, and succeed.

A Lasting Legacy

In March, the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter unveiled a vibrant mural created by Atlanta artist Patreece Lewis, honoring the resilience, hope, and potential of the children and families we serve. In a powerful full-circle moment, two of our Pre-K students joined Carolyn and Bill McClatchy—whose leadership helped launch the Day Shelter in 1986—to reveal the artwork.

The celebration also included the presentation of a City of Atlanta proclamation recognizing four decades of impact. Shared on behalf of Councilmember Mary Norwood by Chief of Staff Jim Elgar, the proclamation honored the Day Shelter's enduring commitment to building pathways and building hope for children and families across Atlanta.



Building Community Awareness

Media coverage throughout the year helped shine a spotlight on the children and families served by Atlanta Children's Day Shelter. Atlanta News First featured Holiday House and welcomed Day Shelter leadership into the studio, while 11Alive highlighted our partnership with the Junior League of Atlanta and Fox 5 shared the story behind our community mural.

Together, these stories increased awareness, inspired support, and helped more Atlantans understand the importance of investing in children and families experiencing homelessness.

BUILDING PATHWAYS. BUILDING HOPE.

Program Highlights



A Child's Day

Every day, families walk through our doors carrying more than backpacks and lunchboxes. They carry stress, uncertainty, exhaustion and **HOPE**



8 AM

A four-year-old arrives at school with a smile, marking a powerful family transformation from the days when her mother's severe depression kept them trapped at home to a new reality where the school serves as a vital pathway to healing and support.

10 AM

In a safe, routine classroom filled with learning and laughter, children are building essential literacy, problem-solving, and social skills while experiencing the vital stability of caring adults and the freedom to just be kids.



2 PM

With reading lessons, the teacher fosters not just literacy, but the confidence and curiosity every child needs to walk into kindergarten ready to succeed.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Growing enrollment for quality early learning.
- Literacy-rich classrooms for kindergarten readiness.
- Daily social-emotional learning for every child.
- Individualized support for diverse needs.



Family Services

Every family's journey is different. Through Family Services, we help parents address immediate needs while building pathways toward long-term **STABILITY**



This year, families received support through:

- Housing stabilization and housing navigation
- Employment and workforce development assistance
- Emergency financial support
- Family literacy programming
- Parenting education and peer support
- Steps2Success goal setting and family coaching

Through the Sunshine Fund and other emergency assistance, families receive critical support for urgent needs, like rent, utilities, and car repairs, preventing temporary setbacks from becoming crises and allowing parents to maintain jobs and housing.

HEALING HAPPENS HERE

DREAMS REALIZED

With the help of the Shelter's kinship support services and guidance, a grandmother overcame financial barriers to earn her Georgia real estate license and celebrate her first property listing.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Determined to create a better future, one unemployed mother completed her CDL certification just days before giving birth, overcoming one of life's most challenging seasons.

FRESH STARTS

After moving between shelters, a mother and her child with developmental challenges found stability through the Day Shelter, securing critical therapies, long-term housing, and employment.



Mental Health: The Foundation for Stability

This year, the Day Shelter expanded trauma-informed care and therapeutic services for families navigating violence, grief, homelessness and crisis

FAMILIES ACCESSED:

- Individual counseling
- Parent Pod parenting education groups
- Support Space peer support gatherings
- Play therapy and child-centered interventions
- Behavioral health referrals
- Family-centered trauma-informed services

632 Child Mental Health & Parent Coaching Sessions

Each session represented more than a conversation. It represented a parent finding hope.

A family finding strength. A child gaining the opportunity to thrive. Because when families heal, futures change. And that's how we build pathways. That's how we build hope.



The Power of Possibility

Every family who walks through the doors of Atlanta Children's Day Shelter arrives with a different story. Some are navigating grief. Some are escaping crisis. Others are pursuing dreams they once thought were out of reach. What connects them is the courage to keep moving forward—and a community that believes in what is possible.

For Tamar, the path forward has always been fueled by determination. While balancing the responsibilities of parenthood and pursuing her education, Tamar continued working toward a goal that once felt distant: becoming a nurse.

This year, she reached a major milestone. Tamar was accepted to Mercer University's Pre-Nursing BSN program, taking an important step toward a career dedicated to caring for others.

Her achievement is about more than a college acceptance letter. It is about perseverance, opportunity, and showing her children what is possible when you refuse to give up on your dreams.



2025 LEGACY BUILDER HONOREE

In 2018, Octavia White arrived at the Day Shelter as a new mother, far from family and carrying the weight of profound loss. While navigating motherhood for the first time, she was also grieving the death of her grandmother and searching for stability for herself and her young daughter, Zara.

At the Day Shelter, Octavia found more than support—she found a community that believed in her strength. With access to quality child care, family services, and a network of encouragement, she continued building the future she envisioned for her family.

Today, Octavia is an executive administrator, business owner, and devoted mother. Zara is thriving—fearless, joyful, and confident. Together, they are building a legacy rooted in kindness, perseverance, and the belief that challenges do not define what comes next.



When Taylor arrived at the Day Shelter in April 2025, she had already taken the bravest step of all—leaving an abusive home to create a safer future for her children.

What she needed next was stability. Because her children had access to safe child care, nutritious meals, therapeutic services, and consistent support, Taylor could focus on rebuilding her family's future.

The results have been life-changing. Naomi received therapy and leg braces and is now walking stronger, more confident, and nearly brace-free. Carter found his voice through speech and play therapy, learning to express his emotions and advocate for himself. Taylor secured employment, purchased a vehicle, and moved her family into permanent housing.

Fayanna's journey at the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter highlights the power of our trauma-informed, two-generational support model. After initially securing housing and employment, she faced sudden setbacks, including a family loss, reduced work hours, and a recent eviction notice. In response, our interdisciplinary team immediately stepped in with intensive case management, successfully connecting her to onsite mental health support groups and critical legal guidance through our partnership with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation.

Demonstrating immense resilience, Fayanna has since secured a higher-paying job and is working closely with her case manager to navigate new housing options. Meanwhile, her daughter, O'ceann, is thriving and receiving speech therapy through our Early Childhood Education team. Fayanna's story is a powerful testament to how flexible, comprehensive wraparound services can meet families exactly where they are, helping them move from crisis to lasting stability and growth.



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- Promise All Atlanta Children Thrive
- The Junior League of Atlanta, Inc.
- United Way of Greater Atlanta, Inc.

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Join us in creating a safer, stronger Atlanta for every child.

Contact Rachel Ezzo, rezzo@acsatl.org

*Recognizing donors who contributed \$1,000+



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HELP KEEP THE GEARS TURNING



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Holiday House

Holiday House brought the magic of the season to life for children and families experiencing homelessness and hardship. Through the generosity of donors, volunteers, and community partners, families were able to select gifts, toys, books, and essential items for their loved ones in a festive and dignified shopping experience.

With the support of more than 300 volunteers, Holiday House served more than 1,200 children across Atlanta, creating moments of joy, hope, and connection during the holiday season.

DEVOTED TO THE JOURNEY

Volunteer Services

Volunteers are an essential part of our work. From playground cleanups and classroom support to event assistance and special projects, they bring the extra hands, talents, and heart that help our programs thrive. Volunteers come in all forms—alumni groups, corporate teams, college students, retired professionals, and community members—and we are grateful for each of them. Their dedication adds a special spark to our community and helps ensure every child and family receives the care, support, and encouragement they deserve.



2025 BY THE NUMBERS

230 Program
Volunteers

327 Holiday House
Volunteers



“

Service is at the heart of everything the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter has done for the 40 years it has walked alongside children and families experiencing homelessness. And that thread of service connects our past, present, and future. Through this work, the Atlanta Children's Day Shelter creates opportunities, builds community, and ensures that every child and every family we serve is seen, valued, and supported.

NICHOLAS HILL, Board Chair

**GIVE YOUR TIME,
CHANGE A LIFE**



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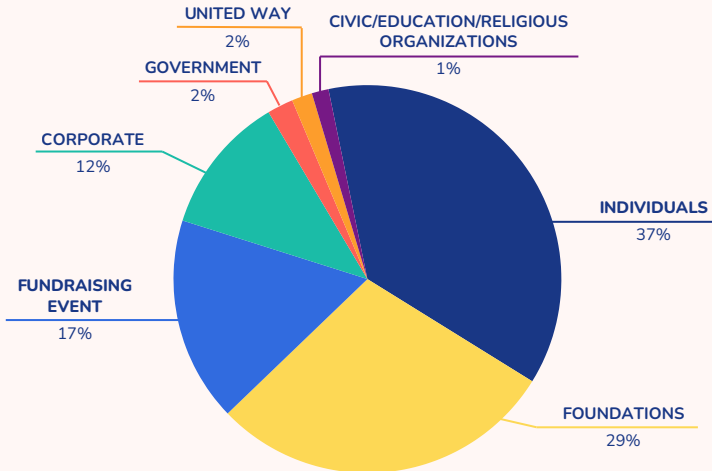
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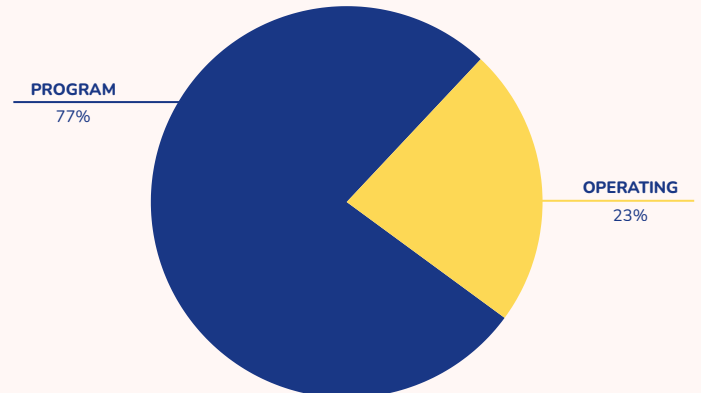
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EXPENSES

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