

HomeFront Happenings

2022 IMPACT REPORT — HOMEFRONT'S YEAR IN REVIEW

WINTER 2022

A Message from Sarah Steward, HomeFront CEO



Dear Friends,

It has been an overwhelming year at HomeFront. As the world began to move on from the immediate crisis of COVID, new crises developed in the lives of the families we serve. Rents are rising faster than we have ever seen and

affordable options are severely limited, pushing families to the brink of eviction and homelessness. Groceries and basic necessities are much more expensive for all of us, a pain especially felt by those with barely any room in their monthly budget. Lines at our food and diaper pantries are nearly double what they were just a few months ago. Children are struggling to keep up in school and life, especially those overwhelmed by their family's housing crisis. Hope feels in short supply, overwhelmed by the struggle of every day.

At the same time, we have also been overwhelmed ***in good ways.*** We've been overwhelmed by the support from people like you – people who see the need in our community and rise to meet the challenge. We've been overwhelmed by the passion and dedication of the thousands of individuals who have volunteered their time and talent in our programs. We've been overwhelmed by the generosity and true spirit of community that has always energized all our efforts.

Most importantly, we've been overwhelmed with awe as we watch our families work so hard to break the cycle of poverty and we've been overwhelmed with pride and excitement as we watch our efforts have a positive impact for the families we serve. We've tutored moms studying hard to earn their high school diplomas, nurtured children growing on a path to realizing their potential, and helped parents navigate the maze of finding safe housing for their children. We've sheltered families from storms and supported them on the path

to stability. We've cultivated hope for the future, made possible by families that now earn living wages and have a safe place to live. We've worked to achieve our mission of helping families break the cycle of poverty, working family by family to meet basic needs and realize their full potential.

This report highlights several HomeFront programs that have made a difference this year and I hope you can find a few minutes in this busy season to share in our joy. Our holistic approach to supporting families on the path to self-sufficiency works. I hope you, too, are overwhelmed by what your support has made possible.

Just as we look back, I am also overwhelmed by the promise of the new year. I am excited to serve families from our newly renovated Lawrenceville Campus with our expanded client service space, new ArtSpace and SewingSpace facilities, and client-choice driven food pantry. We will see the Family Campus in Ewing fully reopened post-COVID with community partners and support services back on site, in person. The new HomeFront Solution Center will ensure that our staff is well-trained and well-connected with every community partner that shares in this work. As we always have, HomeFront will continue to adapt and grow to meet the needs of the families that rely on us for help.

For now, though, in this time when everything seems so overwhelming, we are grateful to be part of a caring community that has come together to change lives for the better. My best wishes to you and your loved ones in this holiday season and new year.

Thank you for your caring!

Sarah Steward
Chief Executive Officer, HomeFront

Want to Help? Learn what we need most: <https://TinyURL.com/HFUrgentNeeds2022>



We Believe that Families Deserve Safe, Secure Housing

PERMANENT HOUSING

HomeFront manages 120 units of safe, secure affordable workforce housing owned by our community partner, Homes by TLC. Our case managers work with each family specific to their needs and provide intensive case management and wraparound supportive services. Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Trenton is \$1,613 a month, leaving little money to spend on groceries and other bills for those living paycheck to paycheck. Families living in our housing pay no more than 30% of their gross income depending on their situation. **Last year, we supported 290 individuals living in our permanent, service-enriched homes.**

HOUSING STABILITY

HomeFront's homelessness prevention program helps families facing eviction with back rent, security deposits, and short-term rental assistance. Since the eviction moratorium was lifted in January, 2022, our homeless hotline has been ringing non-stop. Thousands of local families are living on the edge and facing homelessness if they don't pay back the rent they owe or find a new affordable place to live. Mila, a single mother of 3, became homeless in July of 2022 after years of negligence from her previous landlord which caused a severe rodent infestation inside her apartment. She spent time moving her children around and staying with various family

members, but finally came to HomeFront to get help with a \$2,250 security deposit. Mila told her case manager, "The support truly changed our lives. It's given me room to breathe and allowed my family to move into a safe neighborhood where my kids can actually play outside!"

Last year, HomeFront distributed \$821,415 through our robust housing stability program.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Our Family Campus shelters up to 38 families experiencing homelessness on any given night.

Many of our guests have been through severe trauma, abuse, and significant hardships. HomeFront recognizes that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to help families get back on their feet. Our Campus team provides wraparound services to ensure each parent and their children has a unique plan specific to their situation. We encourage our guests to participate in various life skills programming including health and wellness education, therapeutic art classes, tutoring, job training, and more. Lisa, a current Campus resident explained, "When I came to HomeFront I hadn't eaten in days and was living in my car. I thought about ending my life because I was just so sad. The Campus gave me hope again. Not just hope that life will get better but hope that there are people who actually care about my well-being. I owe so much to the team there."

expressed that visiting our Lawrenceville Campus has improved her mental health. "I am a disabled single mother who does everything on my own and have been receiving assistance from HomeFront since my pregnancy in 2020. HomeFront has helped me with groceries, diapers, wipes, and most importantly, a peace of mind."

Last year, HomeFront provided a staggering 893,490 meals through our food pantries and distributed 1,399,700 diapers and wipes to parents making ends meet.



We Believe that with the Right Tools, All Families Can Succeed

HIRE EXPECTATIONS

HomeFront's job training and high school equivalency prep program serves a vital role in helping families impacted by poverty and homelessness build skills and self-sufficiency. Denise had floated between her family and friends' homes for several years but did not have a place to call her own. When she found out she was pregnant, she knew that had to change and ended up at the HomeFront Family Campus. Struggling with addiction and making minimum wage as a waitress, she needed a lot of support during her stay. Denise is now sober, a wonderful mom, and is enrolled in classes to become a Patient Care Technician. She plans on pursuing a career in nursing.

Last year, 215 individuals were given the tools to improve their academic skills or secured employment through Hire Expectations.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

HomeFront's Health and Wellness Center at the Family Campus has proven to be a critical service offered to Campus guests and Hire Expectations participants.

Last year, 3,440 visits were made to receive services at our wellness center including sick visits, mental health services, eye screenings, domestic violence supports, COVID-19 tests and vaccinations, well baby visits, learning disabilities screenings and general health screenings. Pro bono doctors, pediatricians, eye doctors, physical therapists, nutrition experts, and fitness gurus donate their time and talents to ensure our families are healthy and happy and teach parents to advocate for themselves and their children.

We Believe that Children Nurtured by Love and Support Will Grow on a Path to Realizing Life's Possibilities

JOY, HOPES, & DREAMS

HomeFront's life-changing children's programs provide critical support to hundreds of kids in our community. Our *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* program runs a minimum of five days a week and emphasizes the importance of academic enrichment through evening tutoring and homework help. While academic enrichment is integral to a successful future, HomeFront recognizes that all kids deserve the same exposure to new places, activities, cultures, and hobbies. JHD takes kids on their magic school bus on regular field trips to the bowling alley, movie theater, beach, and sometimes to interesting workshops like juggling and chess! Aimee, a mom of a child in JHD, recently told our team, "I am so grateful to have my son participate in this program. He is doing much better in school, and I can work later and make more money to pay my bills."

Last year, over 100 children made lifetime memories in the Joy, Hopes, & Dreams program.

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

At HomeFront, we know children who have been through trauma and deprivation are likely to suffer long-lasting developmental damage. Unassisted, these kids are at great risk of academic failure, social difficulties, and emotional disturbances as they grow older, perpetuating the cycle of suffering. Through the Children's Champion program, we help reverse drastic outcomes by intervening in meaningful ways, providing trauma-informed care, academic and emotional support, and positive life-enhancing creative experiences.

Ms. Adrienne, our literacy specialist, has been working hard with Billie, a sixth grader who has had a lot of trouble reading and who has been attending the after-school tutoring program since last May. During that time, he has grown from reading second grade words to being able to read at his grade level. Joey recently wrote a short but incredibly sweet note to Ms. Adrienne that said, in part, "my favorite subjects are math and reading."

NOTE: Names in this report have been changed to protect the identities of our clients.

We Believe that Families Need Basic Necessities to Live Lives with Dignity

HomeFront's Resource Network, which encompasses our Food Pantries, FreeStore, Diaper Resource Center, and Furnish the Future program, has faced considerable challenges this year given the significant increase in the number of families coming to us for basic needs. Our newly expanded Lawrenceville Campus has allowed us to establish a Choice Food Pantry where households can select their own groceries instead of receiving a prepackaged bag.

Susanna, a food pantry client, recently



1880 Princeton Ave.,
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

(609) 989-9417

www.HomeFrontNJ.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 1367

*No one is useless in
this world who
lightens the burden
of it to anyone else.*

-CHARLES DICKENS



Help Us Save! If you'd like to receive *HomeFront Matters* online, let us know and we'll add you to our paperless list. Contact homefront@homefrontnj.org



When we count our blessings this holiday season, we count you twice. We wish each of you a healthy, happy holiday season.

- *The HomeFront Team*