

FRIENDS of the  
CHILDREN

Austin

2025



GRATITUDE REPORT





CON·TIN·U·UM

OUR SHARED JOURNEY OF

PROGRESS AND POSSIBILITY



# TO OUR FRIENDS,

Thank you for ensuring that we continue serving children in Austin who are most in need of a Friend.

As we round out our eighth year of serving Austin's youth facing the greatest barriers and my first full year as the Executive Director, I am energized by our accomplishments and excited about what lies ahead.

I became the first Program Director when Friends Austin launched in 2017, and I've proudly been with the organization ever since. One of my greatest joys is that, as Executive Director, I continue to serve as a Friend to one of the girls from our first cohort.

Since enrolling our first cohort of 32 kindergarten-age youth, our program has continued to grow steadily. We now serve 225 youth, ranging in grades from pre-K through eighth grade. It has been extraordinary to see our youth's academic and social-emotional growth as they navigate childhood and adolescence.

Each child develops at a different pace and has different needs, but one thing remains constant: our commitment to ensuring they have a Friend by their side, no matter what.

We know that the key factor to changing the

trajectory of youth who face the greatest obstacles is the stable presence of a consistent, caring adult in their lives. And while Friends Austin's youth continue to amaze me daily with their growth and resilience, make no mistake: they are facing the greatest obstacles.

When everything feels uncertain, what matters most is not what happens – it's who shows up. When others step back, we step forward.

Throughout the past year, I have been inspired by how our incredible community has stepped forward with us.

In the past year, we hired a talented Family Engagement Specialist, who is dedicated to supporting the families in our program

and empowering them to access community resources. This role allows us to greatly enhance our impact on the family members of youth we serve. We remain committed to ensuring that no youth in our program goes without weekly care from their Friend. We have strengthened partnerships with child referral partners, corporate supporters, and the state of Texas, having received a grant from the Texas Health & Human Services Commission, which enables us to continue supporting youth who have experienced the child welfare system.

We are guided steadily by our Board of Directors, comprised of nearly 30 mission-driven community leaders in Austin and beyond. Our staff of 43 continues to operate at the highest standard, allowing our chapter to remain one of the largest and best performing in the Friends of the Children network.

We are especially grateful to you, our community of contributors, for the ways you show up for Friends Austin. We could not do this life-changing work without the partnership and generosity of the foundations, businesses,

organizations, families, and individuals who support Friends Austin.

In five years, our oldest youth will be graduating from high school, and we are excited to see that day. We will continue growing, maintaining the high quality of our program across all ages, and hiring staff who are devoted to excellence. We are grateful for your partnership on this journey.

With immense gratitude,  
Marilyn Manzo-Dawson

Executive Director





# Our Model

Friends Austin’s mission is to break the cycle of generational poverty. We pair professional, salaried, full-time, bilingual mentors (called “Friends”) with children facing life’s greatest challenges. Many of these youth will be the first in their families to disrupt harmful cycles. Friends Austin commits to these children from kindergarten through high school graduation – 12+ years, no matter what.

Friends use their relationships with our youth as the context for evidence-based, targeted interventions. Friends spend at least four hours of individualized, intentional time with their youth every week in the classroom, home, and community. Our Friends and youth work together to develop Roadmap Goals and Core Assets proven to empower them to break the cycle of generational poverty.

# A Foundation for Success

Friends Austin sets three high-level goals for every youth in our program:

1

Graduate from high school with a plan for what’s next.

2

Remain free from involvement in the juvenile justice system.

3

Wait until after their teen years to become a parent.

# Our National Model Yields Lasting Results

92%

of youth go on to enroll in post-secondary education, serve our country, or enter the workforce.

83%

of youth earn a high school diploma or GED.

93%

of youth remain free from involvement with the juvenile justice system.

98%

of youth wait to parent until after their teen years.

Friends develop a Roadmap for each youth they serve, and they work together during their weekly, intentional, structured, one-on-one time to develop a variety of skills and assets focused on meeting their Roadmap Goals.

# Core Assets

Our Friends empower their youth to develop nine Core Assets to build a framework for success.

Belonging

Positive Relationship Building

Find Your Spark

Self Determination

Growth Mindset

Problem Solving

Self Management

Perseverance and Grit

Hope

Learning & Education

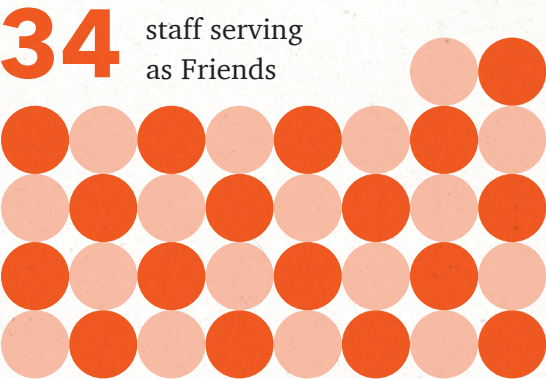
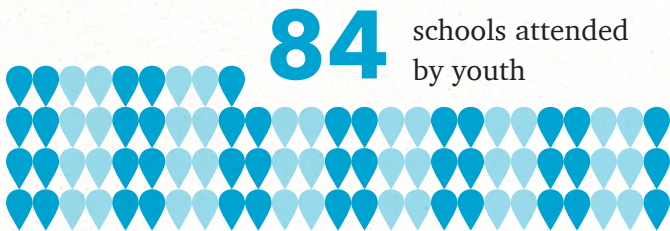
Social Emotional & Life Skills Development

Health & Well-Being

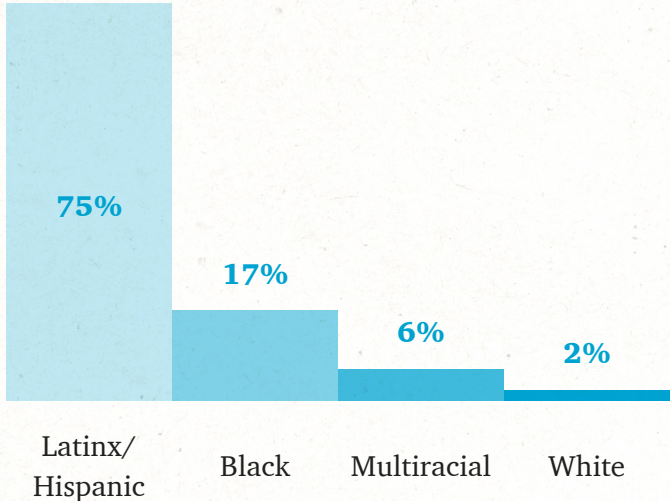
Community Involvement & Belonging



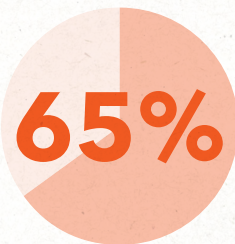
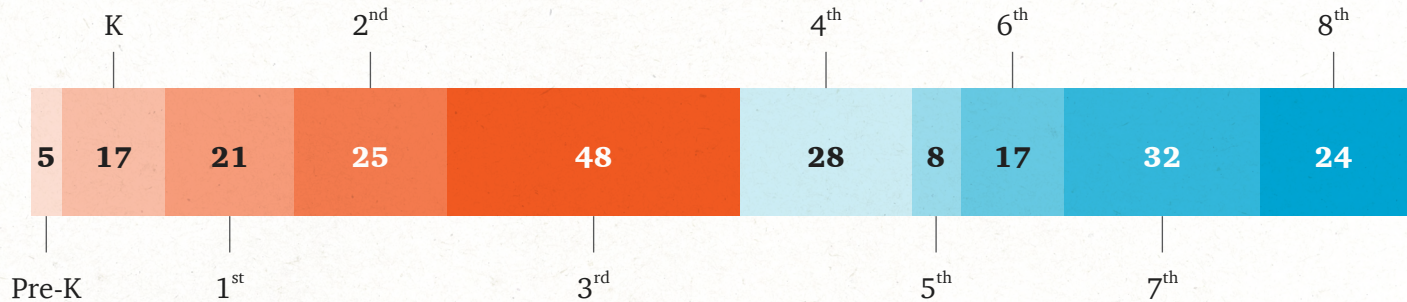
# 2025 by the Numbers



Youth demographic breakdown



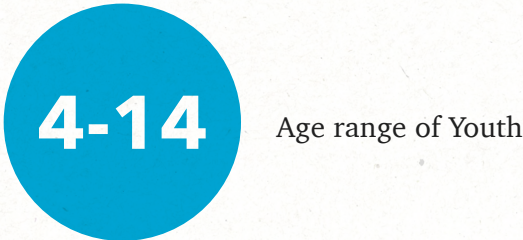
Youth breakdown by grade level



are living in a single-caregiver household



are learning English as a second language



qualify to receive a free or reduced-price lunch

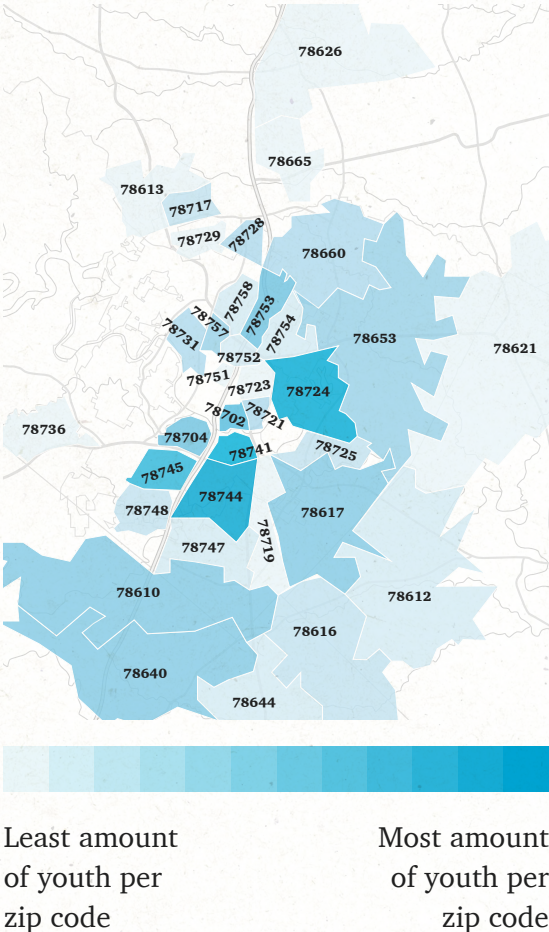


Average number of youth living in a household



spent with each youth every month

Youth breakdown by zip code





“I want her to know that everything that she has done matters, and that every day that she gets up and continues to be herself, to be curious, to ask questions, and to try to figure things out, she’s getting better and growing – and that’s just getting her closer to her bright future,”

Alexandria beams.



## Emily & Alexandria



## Learning to Shine Brightly

Sixth-grader Emily has big dreams.

She looks forward to joining her school’s cheerleading and volleyball teams, and she lights up when she talks about gymnastics. Her Friend, Alexandria, uses these opportunities to connect to larger themes: “We’ve talked about what it takes to be on a team,” she shares. “You have to commit. Once you’re on a team, they count on you to show up, even on the days when it’s cold and rainy or you’re just tired.”

Emily is no stranger to change. At 11 years old, she has already known the child welfare system, experienced the weight of mental health struggles in her family, and experienced housing and food insecurity. She met Alexandria over a year and a half ago, after transitioning from another Friend. Last school year, she navigated having four different fifth grade teachers at one school.

With Alexandria by her side, Emily is learning that change does not have to be scary. “It was

a very unstable school year, and as you can imagine, with that many changes, you might just be unmotivated,” says Alexandria. “It was a hard transition for everybody, but through all that adversity, Emily had almost perfect attendance, her grades improved to nearly all As, and she was involved in extracurriculars throughout the second semester. That was one of the most incredible things I’ve seen: perseverance and grit have really shone through all she’s experienced this year.”

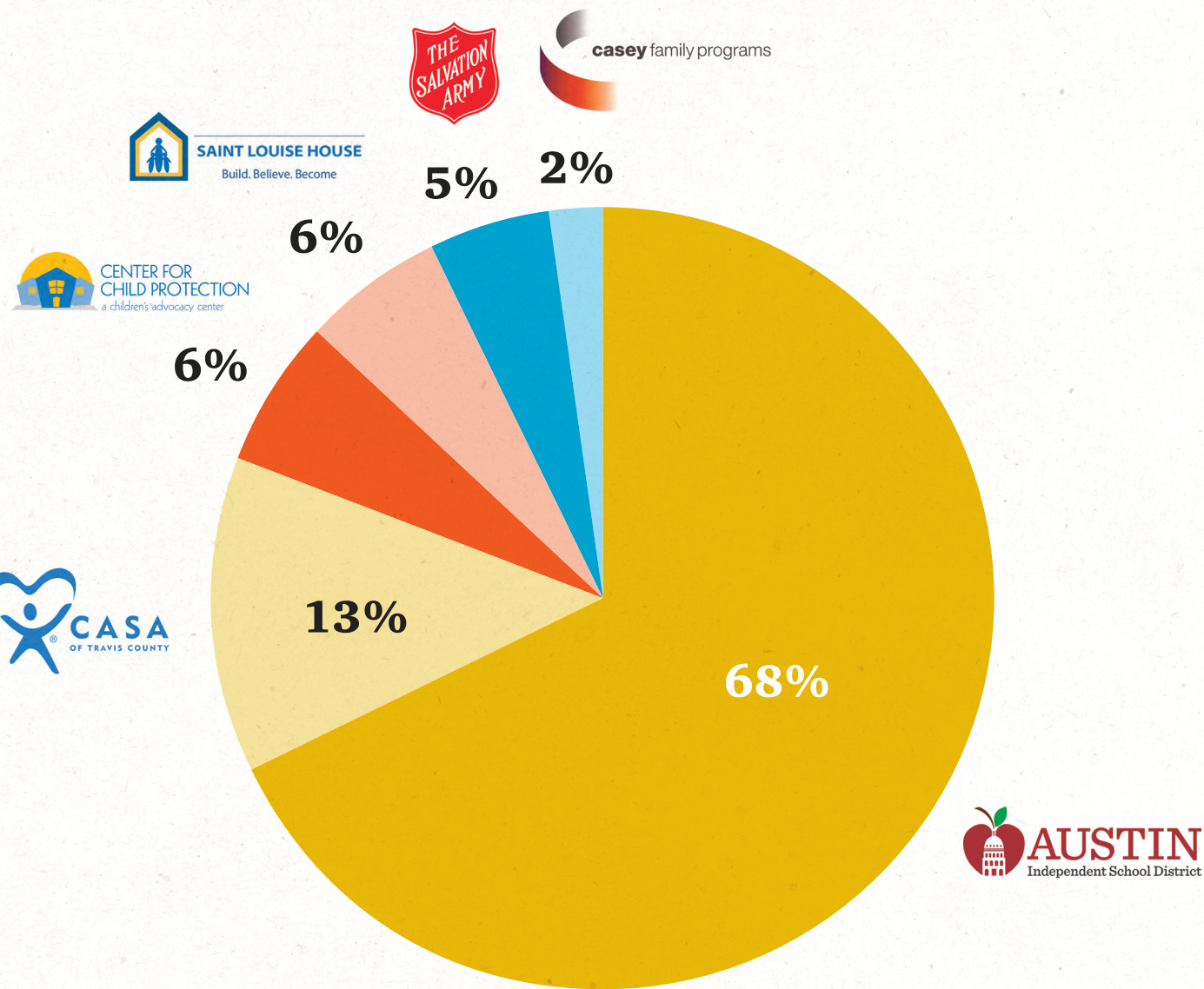
Of course, some things have stayed the same since Alexandria first became Emily’s Friend. They still love exploring parks, going swimming, and being active together. “She’s talented, and people see that in her. I know sometimes she can feel a little shy, but she’s a very bright star. People are very impressed by all the amazing things she does.”



# Youth Referral Partners

Friends Austin partners with three of Austin ISD's highest poverty schools — Overton Early College Prep, Widén Elementary, and Rodriguez Elementary — and five organizational partners to identify children most in need of a Friend.

How do we enroll youth most in need of a Friend?





# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thanks to the support of our community resources, our youth can experience many different educational and engaging activities across the Austin area, exposing them to new places and ideas. Many of our community resources and partners provide support and expertise for the challenges our youth and their families face.



Austin FC offers discounted tickets to our staff, Friends, and youth as part of their ongoing efforts to ensure more equitable access to Q2 Stadium.



The Dyslexia Center of Austin provides full individualized evaluations for youth in our program who may need additional educational accommodations and resources.



As part of Austin Parks & Recreation, the Lorraine “Grandma” Camacho Center provides quality outdoor recreation, nature-based education, and cultural art programs for our youth to experience.



The Expect Respect program, developed by SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone) Alliance, provides training to Friends as they work with youth to promote healthy relationships, avoid teen parenthood, and prevent violence among children and teens.



Austin PBS’ Learning Neighborhoods program offers educational activities that empower youth to build stronger foundations in functional literacy, computational thinking, executive function, and career readiness.



Freedom Schools of Austin offers culturally responsive, STEAM-based summer programming for youth in our program, with an emphasis on literacy.



Ballet Austin offers complimentary tickets to its shows throughout the season, and several youth in our program have participated in Ballet Austin summer camps.



JPMorgan Chase & Co. offers financial literacy classes with customized content for youth of all ages and exposes our youth to career possibilities in banking.



The Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center invites our program leadership to docket observations, tours, and Q&A sessions to learn more about the juvenile justice system and how to support youth in avoiding conviction in juvenile court.



Latinitas empowers all girls to innovate through media and technology and offers spots to our youth in their STEAM-focused summer camp and conferences.



The Paramount Theatre offers our youth complimentary tickets to film screenings and performances and arranges special events for young people to connect with artists.

## The Honorable Sandra Avila Ramirez

Presiding over the 98th Civil District Court of Texas, Judge Avila Ramirez has provided opportunities for program leaders to learn more about the juvenile court in Travis County and to empower Friends to support youth and families as they navigate the court system.

## Dr. Monica Romero

An assistant professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Romero and one of her graduate-level classes have partnered with our Literacy Project Manager to develop a literacy tutoring pilot tailored for Friends Austin youth.



Shine at Trinity Episcopal School provides a free, bilingual, engaging six-week educational summer camp for youth, which includes transportation, meals, field trips, swimming lessons, and more.



Thinkery distributes passes to each of our Friends and youth so they can experience the museum’s variety of engaging, hands-on STEAM activities.



Convened by United Way for Greater Austin, the Greater Austin Reading Coalition works with Friends Austin to support our literacy initiatives.



The Yellow Bike Project provides free bikes to those undergoing difficult life transitions, including over 50 bikes for program youth in 2025.

## Dr. Teri Wood

With a background as a relational intervention and brain development coordinator for AISD and a lecturer for the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Wood provides expertise in strengthening Friends Austin’s trauma-informed care for youth and families.



Greater Austin YMCA provides discounted memberships for Friends to use throughout the summer and discounted rates for youth to participate in summer camp experiences.





# Noah\* & Jonathan

\*Youth name changed for privacy.

## Building Trust and Celebrating Wins

From the first time Noah\* met his Friend, Jonathan, three years ago, he has been sure of one thing: he wants to attend the University of Texas at Austin.

Since then, Jonathan and Noah have been using the Roadmap Goals they set at the beginning of each school year to work towards this dream. Last year, Jonathan helped Noah to prepare and set up an interview with a friend who had attended the University of Texas and works in finance, a field that Noah finds interesting. Noah worked towards goals in school, too, making the A/B Honor Roll this spring and even landing a spot in the competitive percussion section of his sixth-grade band.

Noah first met Jonathan during a time of intense change: his father was coming back into his life after time in prison. He has no relationship with his biological mother. Now living with his grandmother and father, Noah is building a strong relationship with his father. Seeing him consistently through it all, Jonathan has been able to observe Noah's growth over the years.

At times, Noah can be critical of himself and quick to think that something is too challenging. Jonathan finds ways to remind Noah of his wins whenever he can. Having grown up with a mentor of his own, Jonathan recalls the impact of having someone remind him of his strengths. "My mentor would approach difficult tasks and motivate me

by reminding me that I was capable, so I try to do the same for my youth. It's important to show them their wins."

With Jonathan there to support him, Noah continues to set ambitious goals and pursue new interests. This summer, he chose to explore his love for cuisine and was able to attend a summer cooking camp at Sur la Table. Now in the seventh grade, he is taking a cooking class in school, and he and Jonathan are currently trying to perfect their pizza recipe. "He critiques it more than I do," says Jonathan. "I'll eat it and think, 'This is great!' Then he'll turn to me and say, 'This sauce could be different' or 'This texture is off.' But he continues to work on it. He could be a chef one day."



"Noah now believes he can achieve challenging things and is willing

to work harder towards his goals than before," Jonathan reflects.



# A Year in Review

## October

### Fall Festival

Youth and their families enjoyed Trunk-or-Treat, games, face painting, and treats at our Fall Festival. This annual event brings together the entire Friends Austin community for a fun experience!

Photo by Rogelio Casares



## 2024

## November

### Old Friends New Friends

A group of Friends Austin's "old friends" brought "new friends" for lunch at Lamberts Downtown Barbecue to learn more about the organization and support our ongoing literacy efforts.

Board member Libby Doggett discusses the need for literacy interventions and the impact of educational support on the youth in our program.



## December



From L>R: Slay Bells Co-Chairs, Sydney Goode and Karen Kennard, with Friends Austin Executive Director, Marilyn Manzo-Dawson.

### Slay Bells, Jammies at Sammie's

Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch and drinks at Sammie's Italian in their most festive PJs to support Friends Austin at the second annual Slay Bells, Jammies at Sammie's fundraiser.

Photos by Collin Findlay Photography

## March

### The Big Pickle

Supporters joined us for a fantastic day of friendly competition and giving at our third annual pickleball tournament, The Big Pickle.

Photos by Collin Findlay Photography

Teams competed across a variety of divisions, including Mixed and Women's Beginner, Mixed and Women's Intermediate, and our brand new Social division.



## 2025

## May

### Dinner with Friends

The seventh annual Dinner with Friends gathered our community of supporters for an extraordinary evening as we raised a record-breaking \$1.4+ million for our mission.

Photos by Collin Findlay Photography

From L>R: Friends Austin Co-Founder and Dinner with Friends Co-Chair, Nancy Pollard, Friends Austin Board Chair, Jessica Leggett, and Friends Austin Co-Founder and Dinner with Friends Co-Chair, Rachel Arnold.



### Summer Carnival

Friends Austin celebrated the summer with a carnival event for youth and their families to enjoy food, games, and prizes.

Photo by Rogelio Casares

## July





# SEVEN YEARS OF FRIENDS



Shine, a program of Trinity Episcopal School, supports youth and families from communities facing poverty in Austin through a six-week summer camp.

Intended to serve these children consistently each summer from the first through eighth grade, Shine engages students with STEAM-based programming, bus transportation, free meals, swimming lessons, and field trips.

While enrollment in Shine was originally only open to students from Rodriguez Elementary School, Shine generously allowed enrollment for Friends Austin youth from different schools, in partnership with our program, because we understood the incredible impact and value of Shine. Our Friends needed to ensure youth would be able to utilize the transportation provided by Shine; because our Friends build trust-based relationships with the families they serve, they were able to work with families on committing to the youth's attendance.

Shine has remained steadfast in offering spots for Friends Austin youth and continued to provide the camp throughout the pandemic. Likewise, Friends Austin has followed through on ensuring that more of our youth attend Shine, which has often involved Friends picking up youth to get them to the bus stop at 7:30 am every day and joining them during their daily camp activities.

This sustained, intentional partnership affirms and demonstrates the powerful impact of building strong relationships within the Austin community to go further together.

# AUSTIN YOUTH AT SHINE



2019



2025

Of the ten Friends Austin youth attending Shine in summer 2025, some of our oldest youth officially completed their final summer at Shine. Daisy (L) and Ashley (R) have attended the program since summer 2019, learning and exploring with their Friend, Silvana, beside them.

“It is amazing to see students’ confidence grow in activities like swimming or in the arts, and then to see that persistence and growth transfer to the classroom setting.”

**Diana Clemens**

Co-Executive Director of Shine



# Angel\* & Mary

\*Youth name changed for privacy.



## Listening to the Silence

“Do you want to play a specific song today?”  
Angel’s\* Friend, Mary, asks as they climb into the car.

“Let’s just put the playlist on shuffle,”  
Angel answers.

Angel and Mary’s car rides often start this way. They like to explore artists, analyze lyrics, or even simply sit in silence and listen to music together.

For a middle child with five siblings, silence can be scarce. It is especially important for 13-year-old Angel, who, though she easily makes friends, tends to be quieter and more reserved. When Mary first met Angel, her family was living at the SAFE Alliance Emergency Shelter. Shortly after, the family moved north of Austin for about six months before they faced eviction and needed to move again. Throughout the course of seventh grade, Angel attended three different schools and at times was not even enrolled in a school between moves. Mary continued to serve Angel and support the family throughout this time.

Amidst so much instability, music has been an important part of Mary and Angel’s relationship.

Although it took some time for Angel to open up to Mary, music has become a way for them to communicate.

“We have some shared music tastes, and I remember listening to some of those artists when I was her age,” Mary says. “It’s so specific to that era of being a teenager. I remember having the same feelings that I see her starting to experience. It used to feel like it was the end of the world when something bad happened. But Angel never really seems panicked. Even with everything that has happened over the past year, she has come out on the other end and seems to be pretty at peace with herself. She is still kind and caring to those around her. I have the sense that she already knows that, even when things go wrong, it’s not the end of the world. I hope to keep reminding her of that.”

This shared understanding makes quiet moments, like driving in the car on an outing, even more special: “Angel has taught me that silence can be really healing and golden,” says Mary. “Listening to music together while we drive, letting her look out the window, can be the most meaningful way to listen to what she wants to say.”

“She told me once that sometimes, she knows what she wants to say

but doesn’t know how to get it out.

For her, music has been a way to express herself,” Mary shares.





# Cultivating the Joy of Reading

As the Friends Austin program continues to grow, our commitment to providing literacy support for our youth also deepens; 76% of our youth currently read below or well-below benchmark levels for their grade, which is a significant challenge we aim to change. Our Literacy Project Manager works with Friends to develop education-based Roadmap Goals, advocate for educational resources, and build meaningful partnerships to support our youth.

This spring, Friends Austin successfully completed a pilot literacy program with a team of graduate students in the Educational Psychology Department at the University of Texas at Austin. We are expanding this initiative for the 2025-26

school year to serve 30 Friends Austin youth with dedicated literacy intervention in our partner schools.

Our Friends have been trained in administering benchmark assessments for all program youth, which they then use to guide the educational and learning Roadmap Goals for their youth at the beginning of each school year.

This summer marked our fifth annual Book Camp, and bilingual tutors worked with 50 youth over two months to prevent the “summer slide” of literacy loss, support youth in making gains in their literacy, and develop the joy of reading.

## Book Camp 2025



youth attended Book Camp



of Book Camp youth avoided the “summer slide” and made measurable literacy gains



youth who receive special education or intervention services during the school year participated in Book Camp

“Books can be funny, courageous, sad, and empathetic. All of these topics relate to children’s authentic experiences and give them the tools to take on challenges in the future.”

**Brittney**  
Literacy Tutor





# DEEPENING OUR ROOTS IN TEXAS

Friends Austin plays an important role in ending foster care involvement for kids in our region.

Since 2019, Friends Austin has worked closely with partner organizations to enroll and serve child welfare-involved youth. Our referral partnerships with CASA of Travis County, Casey Family Programs, and the Center for Child Protection help us reach kindergarten-age children at a pivotal moment — reunification with their families — after they have experienced foster care.

In Travis County, 45% of children under 12 re-enter foster care within five years of reunifying with their families. Due to the stability provided to children and their families through the consistent presence of a Friend, not a single child enrolled in our program has re-entered foster care.

Our leadership team advocated within the Texas legislature for a multi-million-dollar, multi-year appropriation to provide long-term professional mentoring for children and families involved in Child Protective Services (CPS). In September

2024, we secured a five-year contract with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to provide professional mentoring for children involved in the child welfare system — a highly traumatic experience correlated with long-term academic, economic, and health consequences. We now have over 100 children in our program with documented histories of abuse and neglect.

This grant was awarded to Friends Austin and Friends Houston as we continue to grow and serve more youth with child welfare experiences. Friends Texas is also supported by this grant, enabling us to expand this important work to new chapters across the state.

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# Mateo & Pepe

## Being a Good Friend

One of the first things that Mateo's Friend, Pepe, noticed about him was how considerate he was around others. "He is really close with one of my other youth, and whenever they are together, Mateo always tries to understand how he feels and, if he's feeling down, will try to cheer him up even before I can."

For eight-year-old Mateo, this is simply what it means to be a good friend.

"It means making a funny face to cheer him up, playing with him, saying 'I'm sorry,'" he says.

Although Mateo makes friends very easily now and talks to everyone, it was a different story three years ago. "In kindergarten, Mateo was behind both academically and socially," notes Pepe. At the time, tensions were high between his parents, and he needed more support in school.

Despite the turbulence in his life, with the support of a consistent professional mentor, Mateo has continued to build his confidence, learning how to advocate for himself and ask for what he needs.

Having the support of a Friend has strengthened his mother's confidence, too, like when Mateo received testing for special education last year. "She used to be too nervous to go to his school and talk with teachers," Pepe reflects. "This time, she felt supported to meet with teachers to find out more information about the testing and what it meant for her son, to advocate for him."

They still face challenges such as debt and access to utilities like running water. Mateo and his mother have continued to show resilience and growth since he joined the program. "At the end of the day, the kids' and families' agency comes from within. Our role is to support and empower them," says Pepe. For him, this is what it means to be a good Friend.

As Pepe thinks about the growth he has seen already, he observes, "Mateo is kind and funny. He loves art and solving math problems. We're still learning a lot about each other, but it feels like it's been forever."

"We're still learning a lot about each other, but it feels like it's been forever,"

Pepe smiles.







# A Partner in Growth

## Vista Equity Partners

Since the founding of Friends Austin, Vista Equity Partners and its employees have remained one of the organization's strongest and most consistent supporters. This year, Friends Austin became the official nonprofit partner of Vista's Austin office.

Vista Equity Partners sponsored each of Friends Austin's signature events this year, including supporting Dinner with Friends as the Exclusive Presenting Sponsor for the seventh consecutive year.

In addition, Vista team members volunteered at Friends Austin's Fall Festival and Summer Carnival, and older youth and Friends visited Vista's downtown Austin office at an inspiring Coding and Career Day.

Five Vista leaders currently sit on the Friends Austin Board of Directors: Khalida Ali (Vice Chair), Rachel Arnold (Co-Founder), Ryan Atlas (Past Chair), Brian Loring (Treasurer), and Dan Sullivan.



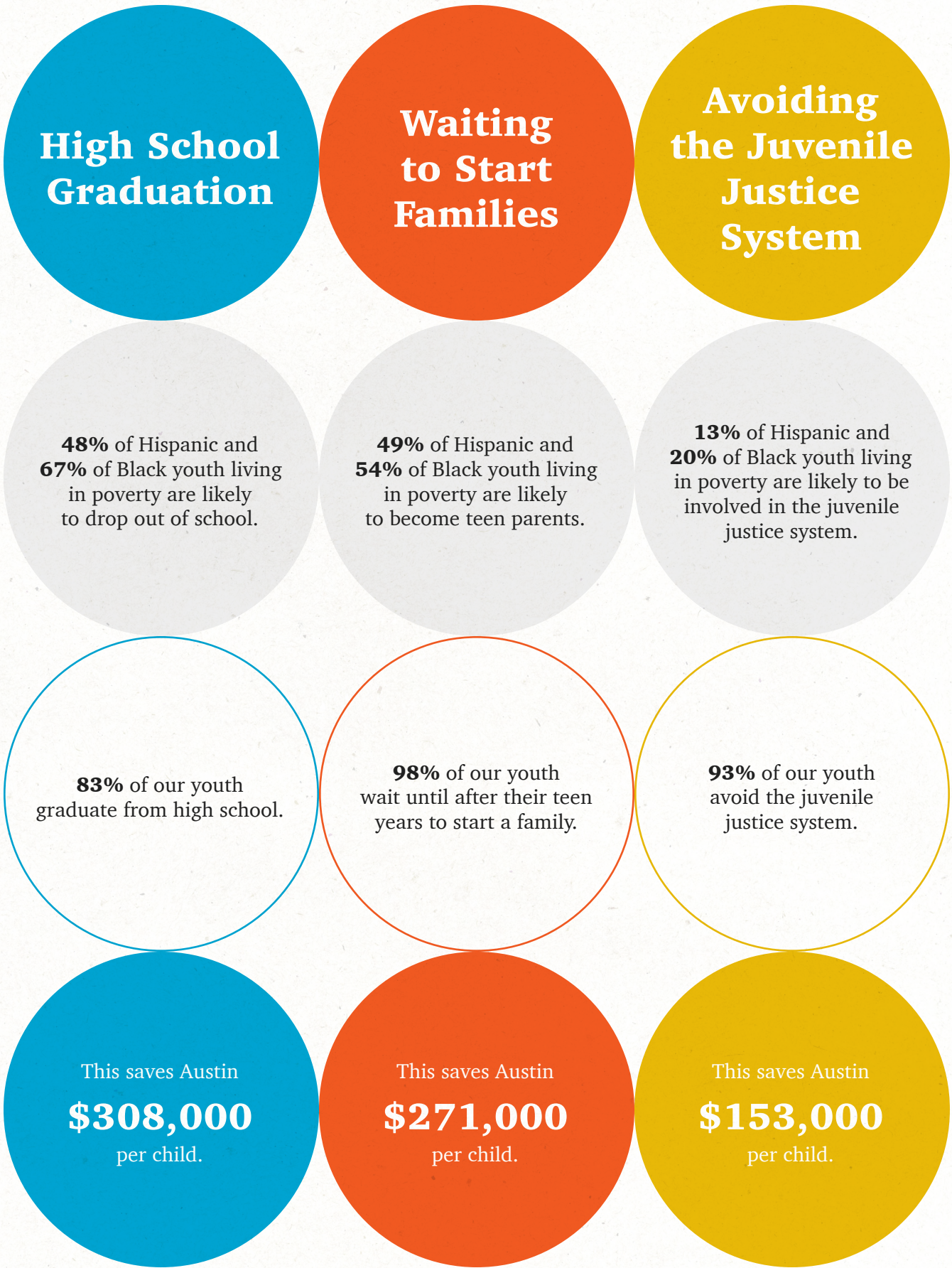
*In January, Vista Equity Partners hosted a group of older youth and their Friends for a tour of their downtown Austin office and a custom crash course in coding. This creative and educational experience gave our youth new insights into future careers while they developed new skills.*





# Investing in the Austin Community

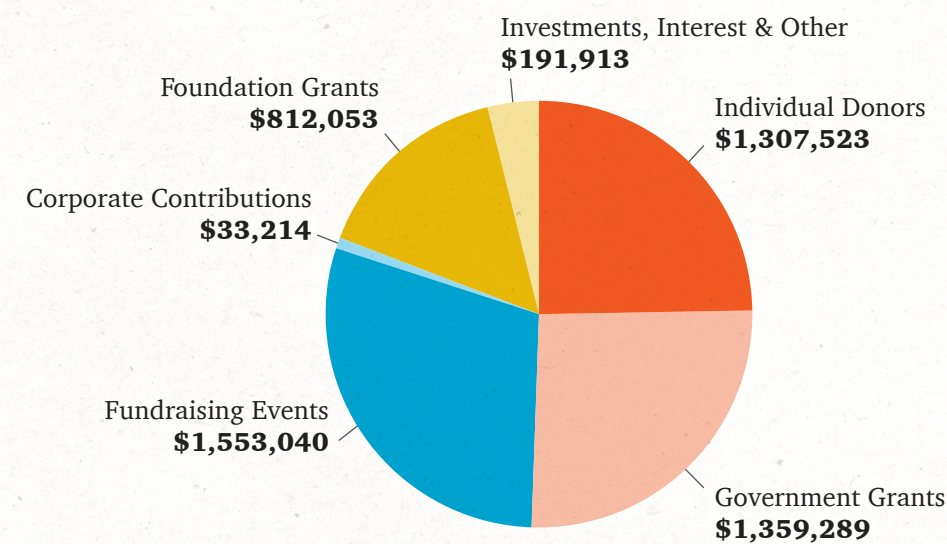
An Austin-specific ROI study conducted in 2018 showed that the Friends program’s three focus areas — graduating high school, waiting until after teen years to become a parent, and avoiding the juvenile justice system — lead to measurable benefits for our whole community.





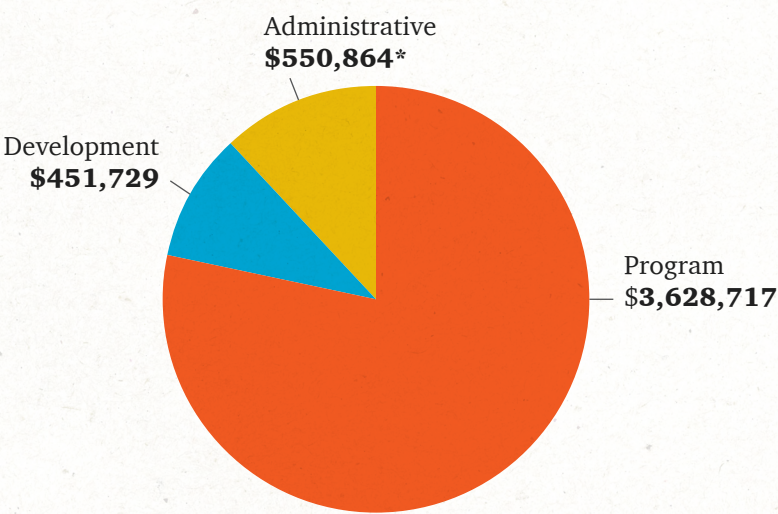
# 2025 FINANCIALS

Revenue Total: \$5,257,032



The 2025 financials exclude a government grant of \$735,209 from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which was received by Friends Austin and distributed to Friends Houston and Friends Texas.

Expenses Total: \$4,631,310



\* The Board of Directors contributes at a level that covers all Administrative expenses.





DONOR LISTINGS

Thank You!

Friends Austin is incredibly grateful for each member of the community who chose to support our mission through generous contributions in fiscal year 2024-2025.

\$500,000+

Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
WoodNext Foundation, a component fund administered by Greater Houston Community Foundation

\$250,000-\$449,999

Anonymous  
\$100,000-\$249,999  
Emily and David Breach  
Moody Foundation

\$50,000-\$99,999

Rachel and Jeff Arnold  
Amy and Joshua Baer  
Bettina and Brian Barrow  
Marjorie Clifton  
Janet Harman and Kent Mayes  
The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention  
Nancy and Mark Pollard  
Mackenzie Price  
Missy and Martin Taylor  
Vista Equity Partners

\$25,000-\$49,999

Ali and Ryan Atlas  
Susanne and Colby Denison  
H-E-B Tournament of Champions  
Joy and Justin Hirsch  
Stacy and Joel Hock  
Anne and Ryan Jacob  
Kirkland & Ellis  
Lauren and Will Liggett  
Maile and Brian Loring  
Lowe Foundation  
The Meyer Levy Charitable Foundation  
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Tory and Milam Newby

Laurie Pompa and Tyron Stading  
Brian Portner  
Dr. Samantha Miller and Russell Valdez  
Caroline and Brian Smith  
Sooch Foundation  
Colleen and Frank Trabold  
Heather and Phillip Wilhelm

\$15,000-\$24,999

Khalida Ali  
Maggie and Anand Anbalagan  
Dr. Susan O’Bell and Mr. Christian Atwood  
Brown Advisory  
Michelle and Alan Cline  
Lauren and Sam Dillard  
The Educational Foundation of America  
Ernst & Young, LLP  
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Jessica and Paul Leggett  
Maria Nicolas  
Johanna and George Peyton  
Agatha and Anthony Precourt  
Caitlin and Gavin Turner  
Vinson & Elkins

\$10,000-\$14,999

AB Private Credit Investors  
Austin Subaru | Continental Automotive Group  
Kristina and Evan Baehr  
Canyon Ranch Austin  
Canyon Ranch Tucson  
Kimi and Stuart Casillas  
Leigh and Clifford Chiu  
Hasso Philanthropic Foundation  
Jenny and Jason Ford

Sydney and Harlan Goode  
Melissa and Shannon Graham  
Caroline and Brian Haley  
Kari and Dave Hernandez  
Jill and J.R. Kraft  
Lauren and David Kanne  
Audrey Pang and Brandon Kinney  
Korman Fine Jewelry  
Shari and Luke Ledbetter  
Macy’s  
Joe Marini  
Jeanette Ward and Greg Mayer  
James Mitchell  
Nolan Ryan Foundation  
Nordstrom Foundation  
Sarah and John Robert Reed  
Amy and Bill Salisbury  
Mary Stanley  
Clare Donnelly and Dan Sullivan  
Jocelyn and Andy Tau  
Dunny and Shelby Wanstrath  
Radney Wood  
Vela Wood  
Marc Zametto

\$5,000-\$9,999

Sarah Coleman and Nick Barnard  
Laura and Kyndel Bennett  
Marissa and Steve Brown  
Buena Vista Foundation  
Kim and Tom Chappell  
The Andrew Clarke Family Foundation  
Kaitlyn and Andrew Coney  
Sara and Thomas Conley  
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett and Libby Doggett  
Dollar General Literacy Foundation  
Meghan and Eric Freytag  
Shannon and Mac Ghangurde

Kate and Steve Goode  
Greenberg Traurig  
Caroline and Russell Groves  
Arron and Chris Hester  
Higginbotham Insurance Agency  
Horizon Bank  
Megan and Will Jenkins  
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Melisa Leal  
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Alice Durnford and Alex Neumann  
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If you feel you have been excluded from this list or we misspelled your name, please accept our sincerest apologies and email [cpage@friendsaustin.org](mailto:cpage@friendsaustin.org) so we may properly thank you.





## OUR STAFF



Staff members from left to right:

Top row: Emma Boydston, Catherine Worley, Caroline Page Groves, Kay Foos, Daphne Jones, Tiffany Dennis, Jonathan Valencia, Marco Bustamante, Alex Torres, Keisha Fulton, LaDonna Davis, Deyanira “Deya” Isassi-Velasco, Marilyn Manzo-Dawson, Sierra Peavy, Sheila Naya, Jodie McGarity

Middle row: Campbell Schouten, Juan Casanova, Marlene Garcia, Hector Garcia, Trey Strange, Roland Reyes, Lupe Galindo, Adrian Cavazos, Benjamin Bazán, Rebeca Saavedra, Oliver Ramirez, Linda Torres, Samantha Escamilla

Bottom row: Abbey Johnson, Sherell Johnson, Jasmine Glover, Jimena Zavala, Freddy Vigil-Zavaleta, Michael Sanchez, Silvana Granados, Mary Isabel Sales, Jose “Pepe” Ortiz, Wayne Young, Nicole Garcia, Anders Allison, Alexandria Ruiz, Veronica Reyes-Leal



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# Dear Friends of Friends Austin,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am honored to share reflections on this past year

and, most importantly, to thank you — our community of supporters and partners — for making this work possible.

Since joining Friends Austin in 2019, I have seen firsthand how this organization has grown into a thriving, deeply impactful part of our city. I am proud to serve as Board Chair because of how unique and powerful this model is: hyper-local, data-driven, and rooted in long-term relationships that transform lives here in Austin, the city we all love.

In the last year, Friends Austin has continued to demonstrate a “No Matter What” commitment to youth and families, showing up consistently even as new challenges and uncertainty arise. It has been remarkable to watch so many individuals and organizations be moved by our mission and invest in brighter futures for children facing the greatest obstacles.

**This year, we also launched a bold new Strategic Plan that will guide us through the next five years — serving 300 youth by 2030, from K through 12th grade.**

This plan focuses on three priorities:

- Driving measurable impact that exceeds national benchmarks, including enhancing our adolescent programming.

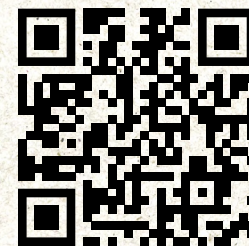
- Building and sustaining the critical resources needed to strengthen our programs, staff, and infrastructure.
- Establishing a scalable and replicable model.

The Board of Directors is a uniquely motivated, accomplished, and deeply committed group who serve as strong advocates and ambassadors as we grow. For the eighth consecutive year, every member has contributed financially to ensure that administrative costs are fully covered — allowing your gifts to go directly to programs and families.

As we enter the ninth year of Friends Austin, I am filled with gratitude. The continuum of this work — one child, one mentor, one family at a time — is only possible because of your trust and partnership. Together with our Executive Director, Marilyn Manzo-Dawson, and our dedicated staff, we remain committed to building a streamlined, highly effective organization that delivers the best possible early intervention and long-term support for Austin youth and families — no matter what.

With Gratitude,  
Jessica Leggett

Board Chair



Watch Friends  
of the Children  
Austin in Action





1023 Springdale Road, 13C, Austin, TX 78721

512-717-6701 | [info@friendsaustin.org](mailto:info@friendsaustin.org) | [friendsaustin.org](http://friendsaustin.org)

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Austin