Friends of the Children-Boston

We are Relentless, So They can be Resilient

OUR MISSION
Impacting generational change by empowering youth who are facing the greatest obstacles through relationships with professional mentors - 12+ years, no matter what.

ABOUT US
Friends of the Children-Boston (Friends-Boston) was built around a simple solution: enter their lives early, provide them with a dedicated, caring adult and stay by their side, no matter what. To that end, we've developed a unique and revolutionary model that ensures quality, consistency and commitment to children facing systemic obstacles so that we can make transformational change that breaks the cycles of generational poverty and trauma. We work with our youth one on one over a 12+ year period - kindergarten through gradation - to understand the barriers they face and help to break the cycle of childhood adversity. To achieve this, we seek out and select children facing multiple adverse childhood experiences and trauma, and relentlessly dedicate our resources to them pairing them with a Paid Professional Mentor (called a Friend) for their entire childhood—from kindergarten through graduation, no matter what. Our high intensity/high impact model, proven through rigorous evaluation, increases graduation rates, and decreases teen parenting and juvenile justice involvement while focusing on the growth potential of each child.

- Friends-Boston has been working with children who have experienced significant childhood adversity for almost 20 years
- Friends-Boston serves 144 of Boston's most vulnerable children plus 400+ of their siblings and caregivers through our 2Gen expansion
- The only organization in MA providing 12+ years of professional mentoring through full-time, experienced Professional Mentors called Friends
- Youth spend 14-16 hours per month with their Friend equaling over 23,000 hours of professional mentoring hours per year
- We call our youth “Achievers” because we believe in their ability to thrive in the face of adversity
- The Social Impacts Exchange's TOP 100 Non-profit Creating Social Change
- Recipient of Wellington Management Foundation’s 3-year Catalyst Gift in 2018
- Recipient of Cummings Foundation 10 Year Sustaining Grant in 2019
- Thanks to the support of Robert Kraft and family, moved to our new facility in 2019 more than tripling our program space
- Implemented child-centered 2Generation (2Gen) Programing in 2021 to ensure whole family support – youth thrive when families thrive
- Recipient of Wellington Management Foundation’s 3-year Catalyst Gift in 2022
- Launched a 5-Year, $20M Strategic Growth Plan in 2022 that will see us double the number of youth served to more than 300 annually

OUR GENERATIONAL CHANGE MODEL
Here’s why our model is a promising solution:

- We seek out those who need us most. We intentionally select youth who have experienced and been exposed to significant adversity and trauma.
- We stay for the long term. Children in our program have a salaried, Professional Mentor (a Friend) for 12+ years, from kindergarten through graduation.
- Our model is relationship-based. Our Friends build one-on-one relationships with our youth, working with them for 3-4 hours a week at school and in the community. We become part of their family.
- We are trauma informed. We provide connection to potential paths for healing families and youth. We train staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma.
- We intervene as early as age 5. Research has shown that the earlier you intervene with a child who has experienced trauma, they are more likely to gain the tools needed to overcome past traumatic experiences and the coping skills to deal with life’s challenges.
- We empower youth to build Core Assets. These are nine research-based qualities we focus on to ensure the social and emotional development of our youth. With our nine Core Assets in place, we believe our youth will be better equipped to overcome past and future adversity.

OUR RESULTS
- 98% of Achievers graduate to the next grade, while 100% avoid incarceration, and 98% avoid early parenting
- 91% of Achievers report consistent school attendance, compared to 72% for all Boston Public School (BPS) students—despite our Achievers facing significantly more barriers and frequently attending schools that rank amongst the lowest in the city
- 80% plus of our alumni are persisting in pursuing a college degree and/or employed, despite the pandemic, which we know is a result of our ability to build years of trust and provide them with a network of support in every aspect of their lives