



2025 Impact Report

FR1ENDS of the
CH1LDREN
Twin Cities



From the Desk of our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It has been an honor to lead Friends of the Children – Twin Cities. This work is much more than a professional path for me, it is a deeply personal calling. I've seen firsthand what happens when someone believes in you, listens to you, and helps you navigate life's complexities with care, consistency, and compassion.

At Friends – Twin Cities, the youth we serve are at the center of every decision we make. And we know, because our data confirms it, that long-term, intentional mentoring has the power to transform lives.

Young people today are navigating challenges that are complex, isolating, and often systemic. What they need are trusted relationships, safe spaces, and champions who see their strengths and help them realize their full potential. A strong mentoring program like Friends – Twin Cities provides exactly that—and more.

Through the long-term relationships our Professional Mentors build with our youth and their families, we see confidence grow, resilience take root, and hope ripple outward. These relationships do more than support individual success. They strengthen families, uplift schools, and build healthier, more connected communities.

We are incredibly proud of our program team, led with dedication and vision by our Program Director, Muriel Dorbor. Each of our mentors brings enthusiasm, care, and unwavering commitment to their work with youth and families.

Though we are still early in our journey as an organization, the impact is already visible. We are witnessing meaningful growth in confidence, connection, and resilience among the young people and families we serve. That growth is a testament not only to our team, but to the power of community.

Our work is made possible by the trusted partnerships we've built with schools, agencies, and supporters who believe deeply in our mission. We are grateful for their collaboration and commitment.

This report highlights the work we've accomplished together so far—and the foundation we are building for lasting change.

With Gratitude,



Batala McFarlane

Executive Director

Friends of the Children – Twin Cities



At the core of Friends of the Children's mission is our organizational value of putting children first, walking alongside youth who face some of life's hardest challenges from kindergarten through high school, no matter what.

One Child. One Friend. 12+ Years. No Matter What.

Our Mission

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

Our Model

- ▶ We intentionally serve the children in our community facing the greatest obstacles.
- ▶ We employ and train salaried, Professional mentors called Friends.
- ▶ We commit to walking alongside youth for the long term.
- ▶ We work closely with parents and caregivers and in all facets of a child's life.

Our Vision for the Future

Sustaining Our Mission

We're building a development strategy focused on long-term sustainability. This includes growing our base of support, pursuing multi-year grants, and telling our story in new and compelling ways.

Investing in Our Mentors

Our Professional Mentors are the heart of our model. We will continue investing in their training, support, and development—because when our mentors thrive, our youth do too.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

We're committed to working hand-in-hand with schools, families, and local organizations. Collaboration is key to building trust, creating wraparound support, and amplifying outcomes.

Using Data to Drive Equity

With every year, our data systems become stronger—helping us identify what works, where we can improve, and how we can better support youth navigating systemic barriers.

Expanding Access

We aim to grow the number of youth we serve each year, while maintaining the quality and consistency that make our program effective. This includes adding new mentors and exploring new school and community partnerships.

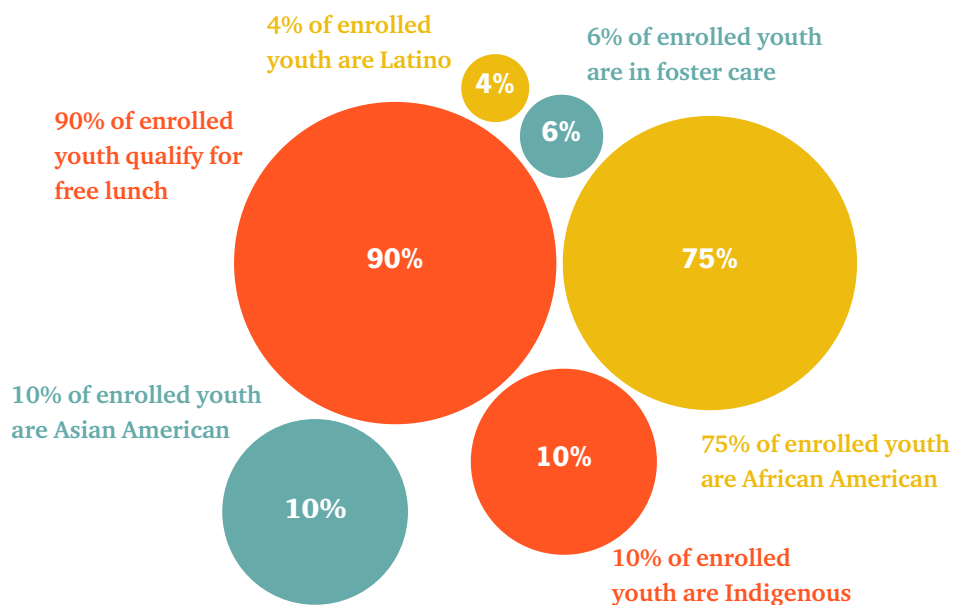
We believe the future belongs to the young people we serve—and our role is to help them claim it with confidence, connection, and community behind them. Thank you for believing in this vision with us. We're just getting started.

The Twin Cities: Our Opportunity

Here in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, outcomes for children facing significant challenges are some of the bleakest in the country, particularly related to child welfare system involvement, education, access to mental health services, and homelessness.

In 2024, Friends of the Children - Twin Cities began working with children ages 4 to 6 in Hennepin and Ramsey counties who have been impacted by systems like the child welfare or justice system. Research shows it is possible to both prevent adversity and reduce the overall impact of trauma for youth and their families. Our trauma-informed, long-term mentoring model recognizes that children facing tough challenges are empowered by the specialized, sustained mentoring relationships that we provide.

Youth Demographics



Friends of the Children - Twin Cities has enrolled 48 youth and supports 34 additional family members through our Two-Generation Approach.



Long-Term Outcomes

Because Friends - Twin Cities is part of a national network with more than 30 years of proven results, we know our professional mentoring model works. For three decades, our model has been breaking cycles of poverty and getting results for youth. Of youth who graduated from Friends of the Children:

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 a GED.

93%

of youth remain free from juvenile justice system involvement.

98%

of youth wait to parent until after their teen years.

Our Impact on Our Community

Kiara's Story



Kiara* is a part of our very first cohort of youth in the Twin Cities! She has been matched with her professional mentor, or Friend, Te'Ashia, for almost one year. When they first met, Kiara was in the midst of some major life changes that were impacting her sense of stability. She was also facing some major breaches of trust from people close to her. At school, she was experiencing some bullying, which was affecting her self-confidence.

Since Kiara and Te'Ashia have been working together, they have been working on building Kiara's confidence back up and helping her feel secure within herself. They are also working together on using kind words, making smart choices when they're around their peers, and being respectful and kind. Kiara has already made so much progress in a short amount of time! She works hard to pay attention to the words she's using and compliments others when she notices their hair or a fun pair of shoes.

The connection between Te'Ashia and Kiara has been strengthening as well. Kiara has experienced some adverse childhood experiences and still shows up with a big smile on her outings with her Friend. They are building trust and Kiara freely shows affection to her Friend. The love and trust in this mentor relationship is a great foundation towards building a successful future for our youth! *Youth name changed to protect privacy.



**Events attended
thanks to
Tickets for Kids**



**300 hours/month
spent with youth out
in our community**



300

**70 hours/month
spent in schools
supporting youth**

Malik and Jayden's Story



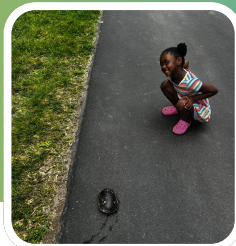
Malik* and Jayden* showed up at the park one sunny afternoon with a basketball in hand and one goal in mind: to make a basket.

“The hoop stands double their size, but that didn’t stop them,” their Friend, Darlington, shared. “For the first fifteen minutes, they just practiced getting the ball high enough to touch the rim.” After watching Darlington make a few baskets, their determination grew, and then a kind kid from the nearby community center joined in to share a few tips. With grit, perseverance, and encouragement, they both began making layups, and Jayden even made a mid-range shot.

They celebrated with ice cream, but the real victory was what they learned along the way: that effort matters, that support makes a difference, and that confidence grows one small success at a time.

*Youth names changed to protect privacy.

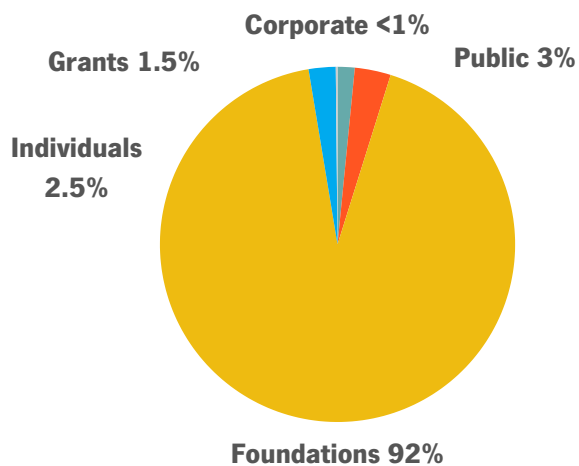
Zhanna's Story



Zhanna* and her Friend Kyah are a dynamic duo that are working hard on building a growth mindset. When they went with another youth, Tia*, to a local park with lots of wildlife and nature to explore, Zhanna was scared to cross a bridge to explore further into the park. With lots of encouraging words from both Kyah and Tia, Zhanna was just about ready to cross the bridge when a turtle appeared! It took some more encouragement before she was ready to cross the bridge and pass the turtle. Tia asked for a picture with the turtle, and to their surprise Zhanna asked for one as well! She was still a little afraid, but now she was also excited. With the help of her Friend and the support of her peer, Zhanna was able to face her fears and explore more of her community! *Youth names changed to protect privacy.

FY2025 Financials

Source of Funds: \$1,266,123



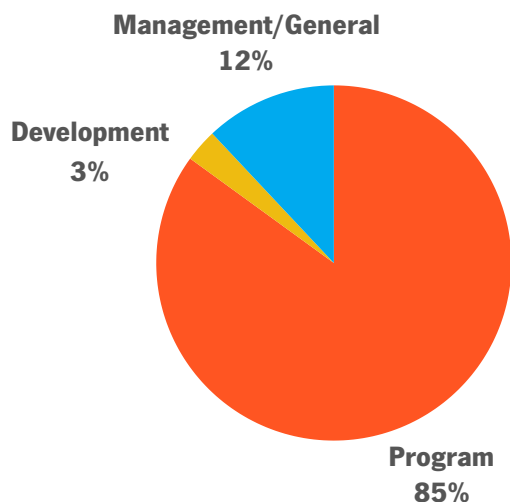
Our Board of Directors

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Thank You to our Seed Funders

Bazinet Family Foundation
Sauer Family Foundation
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Carlson Family Foundation

Use of Funds:



And Our Partners

Ain Dah Yung Center, Community Action
Head Start, Fraser, Hennepin County Child
and Family Services, Minneapolis Public
Schools, Hmong Prep Academy, The
Journey School, Montessori American
Indian Childcare Center, PICA Head Start,
Shakir Consulting

Elaine's Story



Elaine* is one of the youngest children in our Friends - Twin Cities program. When she first met her Friend, Roxy, she was shy and quiet. Over the past several months, however, she has begun opening up to her mentor and grown more comfortable showing her emotions. Roxy works with her on being able to share her feelings and to know that it isn't wrong to feel a certain way. During a visit to the library, Elaine felt comfortable venturing into a play area where other kids were already playing. Roxy was proud to see that Elaine is growing, curious, and more open to new experiences!

*Youth name changed to protect privacy.



“I was incredibly privileged to serve as a Friend myself through the Friends - New York City chapter...I experienced firsthand the impact Friends could have on the lives of children and families who are already incredibly strong and need more support to overcome those systemic barriers that stand in their way.”

*Kyrre Rankine
Friends - Twin Cities Board Chair*

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**FR1ENDS of the
CH1LDREN**

**Generational Change,
One Child at a Time**

Twin Cities



“Her Friend is a perfect match for Aliyah. She is caring, and good listener, and communicates well.”

Caregiver of youth enrolled at Friends - Twin Cities

