

“ Because **no family** should ever experience homelessness and **every child** deserves the opportunity for a brighter future. ”



IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“What if I could show you how?”
This is arguably one of my favorite questions because it opens the door to possibility. After all, if I can show you how, it means your dream is within reach.

Last summer I was reading the historical fiction novel, “The Four Winds” by Kristin Hannah. I found myself wondering why the main character repeatedly made choices that kept her children and herself living a hard life in deep poverty, rather than making different choices that could lead to a life of prosperity and comfort. She was an educated woman. In theory, she had options.

Then I recalled a conversation I had with one of our RaiseUp clients, Shynah, featured in this Impact Report.

“My whole life I have done all the right things. I graduated from high school. I went to college. I got my degree. I work hard. And yet, I could never seem to get a job that paid anything or get ahead in any meaningful way. I had all the pieces, but until RaiseUp Families I never knew how to put them together to make them work for me.”

What if I could show you how? Armed with this simple, yet powerful question, our Board of Directors and staff embarked on a journey to start showing our clients how.

Parents entering our program are often working the lowest paying jobs in Houston, but not because they lack skills or abilities. They simply do not know how to attain better employment and do not feel comfortable outside the environments they have worked in their entire adult lives. Understandable.

To address this, we started a book club to teach our clients the unspoken rules of the workplace. We shifted our discussions in monthly Case Management meetings to break down barriers and long held beliefs, asking, “What if I could show you how?”

One statistic RaiseUp Families has always prided itself on is our ability to help families increase their income by an average of 35-40% during the time they are in our 9-month HandUp Program.



This year, **our clients experienced an average 61% income increase in just 9 months**, and we’re just getting started.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, and the 158 parents and children who did not experience homelessness and received an uninterrupted education this past year, THANK YOU for sharing your gifts and prayers with RaiseUp Families.

I could not be more excited about the year ahead and the tremendous strides our families will make with your support!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela M. Burgess".

Angela M. Burgess
Executive Director



JOY

OUT OF DARKNESS

"I don't think I would be here today if it weren't for RaiseUp Families," Joy said as she sat across the table from our Executive Director at our Back-to-School event this August. "What brought my son, Kristopher, and me to RaiseUp Families was that I needed help. I'm a single mother, had lost my job, and didn't know how I would pay my rent and utilities. My depression was in overdrive, and I was about to give up on life."

This is a story we hear all too often at RaiseUp Families. When parents are used to living paycheck to paycheck, an unexpected financial hardship such as job loss, medical or car repair bills, or a high interest loan can send them into a downward spiral that is nearly impossible to recover from. They want to be able to provide a stable home for their children, but the stress of not being able to pay their rent is too much to bear.

Thanks to you – our generous supporters – within a week of beginning our HandUp program, Joy found employment and began connecting with the RaiseUp support system. "Being alone is never a good feeling, but it's how I felt before RaiseUp Families. It affected my mental and physical health."

"Today, with RaiseUp in our lives, my son is much happier and has engaged more, and I'm now getting the help I need." Best of all, after just 3 months in the HandUp Program, "I'm in the black on my budget for the first time in my life. I no longer pay bills on my credit card. It was an incredible feeling to see money left over at the end of the month."

Today, Joy's view of the future is starkly different than it was in May. "I see nothing but greatness ahead and the future is bright for my son and me! RaiseUp Families has given me many tools to start my life over on a new path and I'm ready to learn more and explore."



NORMA

A WAY AHEAD

¿Sabes que somos bilingües? (Did you know that we're bilingual?) Half of the families we served last year identified as Hispanic and 10% speak little to no English. This was the case for Norma. "I grew up in Honduras as one of 13 children. By age 9, at the end of 3rd grade, my family needed me to work. I left school and never went back."

Norma came to the United States when her family lost everything in Hurricane Mitch. She met her husband, José, in 2007 at a friend's house. They were married and in January 2009, she gave birth to a son, José. "My husband was a good provider. He took care of all the finances, and I never had to worry about anything."

That all changed when Norma's husband contracted Covid in 2021. On September 28, 2021, he lost his battle and passed away. "Overnight I went from being a stable, stay-at-home mom to a single, unemployed parent with no way to pay our rent or bills."

But Norma's life was transformed when her apartment manager referred her to RaiseUp Families. **Norma will graduate from our HandUp program** in October 2022 stronger than ever. "RaiseUp Families has connected me with a community of people who are lifting me up." Norma has taken full advantage of our program, as well as those of a few of our partner organizations like Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM) and Harris County Department of Education for one-on-one financial coaching and English as a Second Language courses, respectively.

"RaiseUp Families came into my life when I was at my lowest – the most difficult time I had ever been through. I now know the importance of a rainy-day fund and have money in savings. I'm leveraging my natural skills and the activities I love to start my own business with the help of RaiseUp Families."



Watch
Norma's
Story

While Norma's life will never be the same, her future is bright, and she looks ahead with optimism and gratitude.



SHYNAH

BECOMING A DREAMER

When a parent experiences financial hardship, people forget that children feel it too. No matter how young they are, they can sense the stress and struggle their parents are feeling. When you're drowning in bills, it's hard to maintain a healthy and happy home where your children can focus on their education and not feel the stress of your financial worries.

That was the case for Shynah. "My issues — struggling with financial hardship, never able to truly get ahead — impacted my daughter in ways I didn't even realize."

A single mother of 12-year-old Madison, Shynah heard about RaiseUp Families on a channel 13 news segment. "I was looking for a lifeline." She immediately embraced every opportunity our program has to offer, including a few of our newest, pilot programs: Book Club; Dream, Believe, Achieve; and Business Edge (offered through our partner, NewSpring).

Our first Book Club for clients was hosted by Jenna Moon, Executive Director of Atlas Scholars and journeyed with 4 of our clients through "The Unspoken Rules: Secrets to Starting your Career off Right."

"No matter your age or job experience, everyone can benefit from reading this book," Jenna said. And that certainly was the case for Shynah.

"That book club changed my life. It gave me the skills I needed to learn how to add value in my workplace and how to advocate for myself to get a raise." In fact, **Shynah is now earning 4 times what she was making when she first entered HandUp!**

"My biggest takeaways from this program? There are too many to count." From a family impact standpoint, she's able to identify when she is projecting her anxiety and stress onto her daughter. "I now check my emotions before interacting with my daughter. I have new coping skills and therapy has helped me develop better habits and systems.

"When I first came to RaiseUp Families, I struggled to get out of bed each day. Today I'm a dreamer creating attainable goals that I know are within my reach. I'm no longer allowing the word 'no' or obstacles to slow me down. As Angie always says, 'every no just brings you one step closer to a yes'."



From left to right: Vanessa, Kunisha (keynote speaker), Shynah, Jasmine

RAISEUP FAMILIES GRADUATION CELEBRATION

Over 200 people joined our graduating families on April 26th at The Rustic Post Oak to celebrate our client's achievements and hear about our plans for the future.



Want to know how YOU can change a life in the year ahead?

Scan the QR Code to learn more about the volunteer activities that inspire our clients and create change.



VIEW this condensed version of our Graduation Celebration and **SHARE** on your social media channels to help spread the word about the amazing work we're doing through your support!

Clients Served, Graduation Rate & Income Impact



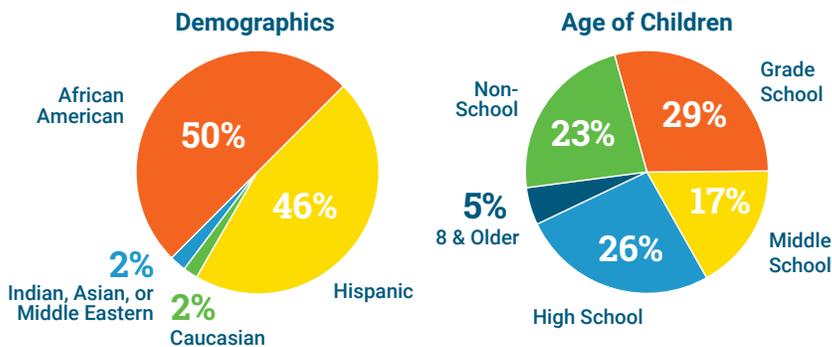
HandUp and AfterCare Programs SERVED 345 PEOPLE IN 2021-2022

HandUp Housing Program

Clients Served at least one month during FY 2021-2022

43 families | 64 adults and 93 children

HandUp helps families seek or retain employment while assisting with basic living expenses, such as rent, utilities, transportation, childcare, and job-related education and training.



Skill Development

- 17 clients received employment/job search training
- 14 clients assisted with tax services
- 3 clients earned their GED
- 1 client completed ESL program

Services Provided

- 90% with transportation
- 62% with furnishings
- 74% with peer group counseling
- 42% with repairing their credit

Children's Involvement

- 12 children attended Camp Allen
- 26 children daily average attendance for summer day camps with a total of 34 children enjoying one day or more of day camp
- 32 children received at least 2 books through our Summer Reading Program with snacks
- 60 backpacks filled with school supplies were provided

100% of children stayed in same school



Our Graduating Families

+61%

Average income increase: 61%
Average household income at HandUp program entry was \$21,520 and \$37,860 at graduation

- 80% graduation rate
- 87% of families had full-time employment when entering our program and 9 months later 96% had full-time employment

AfterCare Program

67 families | 103 adults and 156 children

Families who successfully complete HandUp are invited to keep going on their journey to self-sufficiency through our AfterCare program, which lasts another two years.

ONE YEAR follow-up:

- 100% were still housed
- 100% still employed with 36% experiencing a raise or promotion in their career.

TWO YEAR follow-up:

- 88% were still housed
- 88% still employed with 50% experiencing a raise or promotion in their career.



3 families successfully saved in the Dollar-a-Day Savings Program for 6 months and 2 families successfully saved for a year.



91% of clients in our AfterCare program feel life is better since graduating from the HandUp program.