



# brightpaths Impact Report

2025

# Education. Connection. Support.



brightpaths

Dear friends,

I hope this message finds you happy and healthy. I am so grateful to welcome you into our 2025 Impact Report!

First, thank you. Whether you attended Starry Starry Night or another event, volunteered your time, or supported Brightpaths financially this year, your care has helped thousands of parents and children in our community find safety, stability, and hope. You have been part of something truly special!

This year brought challenges none of us expected. Federal and state grants that once made up a large part of our budget were cut, more than \$275,000 in total. Cuts like these could have meant fewer home visits, canceled parenting classes, or families left without the support they depend on...

But that didn't happen.

Because of people like you, families continued receiving the consistent, compassionate support they needed. Parents kept learning how to build safe, stable homes. Children continued to thrive. Our services held strong because our community did too.

One mom recently shared a story that has stayed with me:

**"I was in a bad spot when you came to my house. I wasn't sure how to move forward. I knew I wanted changes but I didn't know how to make them. This program has supported me to be a happy mom. I now play with my children, and my inner child comes out when we are all on the floor or outside playing. Brightpaths has been a blessing to me and my girls."**

This is the heart of our work. This is the kind of transformation your support of Brightpaths makes possible.

As you read through this report, I hope you feel proud. Proud of the families who have worked so hard this year, proud of the impact you've helped create, and proud of the community we are strengthening together.

Thank you for being part of the Brightpaths village.  
With gratitude,



Sallie Zehna Starrett  
Executive Director & CEO



We're on a mission  
to **prevent** all forms  
of child abuse and  
neglect in Athens  
and the surrounding  
areas

Our **vision** is a  
community free of  
child abuse and  
neglect... and we're  
getting closer  
every day!



# Our Team

Cheryl Aaron



Grace Arthur



Irma Cadle



Erica Chastain



Monica Cruz



Tonya Cosby



Lilis Deal



Raquel Edwards



Kiarra Giles



Courtney Hall



Jennifer Henderson



Gabriela Martinez



Annette Maynard



Brenda Parra



Regina Peck



Victoria Reeves



Tiara Smith



Carley Staggers



Sallie Starrett



Wanda Whitehead



# Healthy Families

## Home Visiting Program

Healthy Families has been our signature program for over 30 years. As a nationally-accredited site of Healthy Families America, our highly trained home visitors serve families from birth to 5 years old with an evidence-based, strengths-based curriculum.



**Brightpaths has  
helped me navigate  
some of the most  
difficult times of my  
parenthood. I don't  
know how I would  
have survived without  
my support through  
this program.**

68

*-Madison County mom*

**3,467**  
HOME VISITS IN 2025

# What's in a home visit?



**Home visits focus on strengthening families, connecting caregivers with resources, promoting strong parent-child attachment, coaching parents on learning activities that foster their child's development and supporting parents' role as their child's first and most important teacher. Home visitors also conduct regular screenings to help parents identify possible health and developmental issues.**



Children are assessed on several levels, given developmentally appropriate toys and activities, safe sleep kits, and other necessary support and parent education.

This year, we completed 648 Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and Social-Emotional ASQ screens, 108 Edinburgh maternal depression screens, and 92 intimate partner violence screens.

**70%**  
**REDUCTION IN  
PREGNANCY  
COMPLICATIONS**

Moms who enroll in Healthy Families program prenatally experience 70% fewer pregnancy complications, leading to healthier pregnancies, safer births, higher birthweights, and more positive outcomes for our kids.

In all Healthy Families cases across the nation, first time moms who enroll in Healthy Families are 49% less likely to experience a Child Protective Services report. Furthermore, our program prevents the recurrence of child maltreatment by 33% among families who have already had CPS involvement.

**217**

**FAMILIES  
ENROLLED &  
SCREENED**

**49%**  
**FEWER CPS  
REPORTS**

# Our Board of Directors, Partners and Volunteers keep us moving forward.



I serve as Board President of Brightpaths because I believe every child deserves to grow up safely. Too often, families face challenges that no one should have to face alone — and when we step in with compassion and support, we can change the entire direction of a child's life. My "why" is to make sure every family in our community has the tools and care they need to thrive, so every child has the chance to grow up free from abuse and full of possibility.

Kelly Goekjian, Board Chair

# Thank You!

to all of our Individual Donors,  
Corporate and Event Sponsors

Royal & Cross LLC is a family law firm that fights to protect people and their children when life doesn't go according to plan. Brightpaths aligns with our mission, and we strongly believe that Brightpaths is making a meaningful and tangible impact on the families in our community. We are honored to partner with Brightpaths!



**telecom**  
INNOVATIONS



**ROYAL & CROSS, LLC**  
—FAMILY LAW—



**CLASSIC  
CITY  
BANK**

**BOSWELL  
OIL**  
COMPANY

**OCONEE  
PRINTING**

3,548

REFERRALS MADE

Our staff regularly refer clients not only to our programs, but to other organizations and supports like housing, employment, childcare, food insecurity, utility assistance, domestic violence, medical, and so much more. For many families, Brightpaths is the first step towards a healthier, more connected future for their child.

Babies don't come with an instruction manual, but the First Steps bag is pretty close! Not only do we offer critical resources for parents of newborns, we are a listening ear, a wealth of information, and an answer to "what's next" for many parents, especially the almost half that are first-time moms!

46%

FIRST TIME  
MOMS

**Brightpaths is my safety net. I can talk about my problems and how I'm feeling. They provide us with different services, very supportive and I LOVE My Family Support Specialist.**

*- Walton County mom*

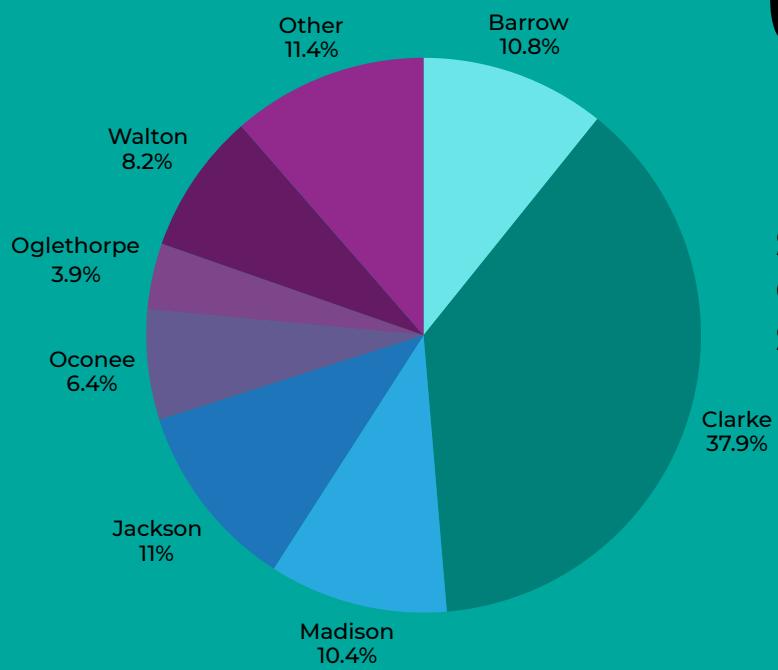


# First Steps

## In-Hospital Newborn Support

We have full time staff in Piedmont Athens and St. Mary's daily. They provide First Steps visits to newborns and their parents, offering a "First Steps Bag" full of critical resources, referrals, and supports.

Where do visited babies live?



## What's in the bag?

**Brightpaths Developmental Calendar**  
**Pediatrician Referrals**  
**Postpartum Depression tools**  
**Safety Kit**  
**Community Resource Guide**  
**Safe Sleep Information**

*...and more!*



# 1,422

NEWBORN VISITS IN 2025

# Events

In addition to our programs and parenting classes, we're constantly offering events to spread awareness, recruit parents, and connect families.

4

COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

10

HEALTHY  
FAMILIES  
GROUP  
EVENTS

15

PUBLIC  
TRAININGS



# Starry Starry Night

Starry Starry Night 2025 represented the reason I've spent the past four years volunteering with Brightpaths. It was a night of fun celebration with a clear purpose of why we were there - to honor and support the families we serve in our communities. Our children are the future, and they all deserve a path of safety and hope. It has been the greatest honor to serve my neighbors. We all are in need and deserving of support.

- Tiffany Anderson,  
committee chair

## Concert on the Lawn

This year, our concert on the lawn raised funds to install our brand new outdoor play space! Opening April 2026.

# 3

SIGNATURE  
FUNDRAISING  
EVENTS



## Pins for Prevention

I loved volunteering at Pins for Prevention. It's a fun, uplifting event that supports Brightpaths' mission. Knowing my time helped provide resources and guidance to local families made it especially rewarding.

- Mallie Bragg,  
committee chair

# Parent Education

## Classes and Workshops

We offer classes in multiple languages and counties, both in person and virtually. Our parents work through our 10-week Nurturing Parenting Program curriculum, one-day workshops, or weekend relationship classes.



140

PARENTING  
CLASSES

66 Our family loves Brightpaths. It is a great support system to have since we do not have that in our personal lives. We love having them as part of our family and village!

-Jackson County mom

# 65

## CHILDCARE GROUPS

One of the biggest barriers our parents face to getting the parenting education they want is child care. That's why we provide free childcare at every in-person class, run by trained volunteers. Our parents and kids enjoy a free meal, time to learn and connect with others.

In addition to group parenting classes and workshops, we offer individual counseling and coaching sessions for parents looking for one-on-one support as they navigate family preservation, reunification, co-parenting, or other parenting challenge.

# 257

## INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

# 5

## PARTNERSHIP GROUPS

We had the privilege of partnering with local experts like professors, community groups, and Elementary schools to offer topic specific workshops including parenting teens, special needs parenting, safety and more.

We've partnered with the University of Georgia for all 5 years of their Project F.R.E.E. Elevate grant, teaching hundreds of couples how to Elevate their relationships and create a stable foundation for their family. This year as the grant cycle ended, we were honored with several outstanding site awards.

# 5

## YEARS OF ELEVATE





# 100,000

DIAPERS PROVIDED

Through our partnership with the Athens Area Diaper Bank, local donors, and individual diaper drives, we've provided over 100,000 diapers. More than just clean babies, diapers allow our kids to stay in daycare, parents to work, and families to thrive.

**416**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

Our Family Resource Closet is run entirely by volunteers. Over 400 hours donated to help families shop for the diapers, wipes, formula, clothes, cribs, and so much more donated by community members and partners.

# Concrete Resources

**Brightpaths** has been a wonderful support system for my family! Beyond meeting basic needs like necessities and resources, Brightpaths brings hope, dignity and a chance for families to build a better future.

*-Oconee County mom*

**500**

FOOD SHOPPERS

This summer, we became members at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, allowing us to provide food for families and their children in our resource closet. Each week volunteers help families shop for basic needs to ensure their children have safe and stable childhoods.

# Counseling

Piloted in 2023, launched in 2024, and expanded this year, we're proud to offer licensed counseling at no-cost to our parents.

175

COUNSELING SESSIONS

83% 67% 28%

ADULT CLIENTS  
WERE ABUSED  
AS CHILDREN

PARENTS HAD  
DFCS INVOLVED  
AS A CHILD

PARENTS HAD  
DFCS INVOLVED  
AS AN ADULT

Our counseling clients are parents working hard to break generational cycles. The majority of them experienced abuse and Child Protective Services involvement in their own childhood, while only 28% had any sort of CPS intervention as a parent. Through our counseling program, parents are finding healing, and children are experiencing healthy childhoods.

23  
FREE CHILDCARE  
SESSIONS

36  
TRANSPORTATION  
SUPPORTS GIVEN

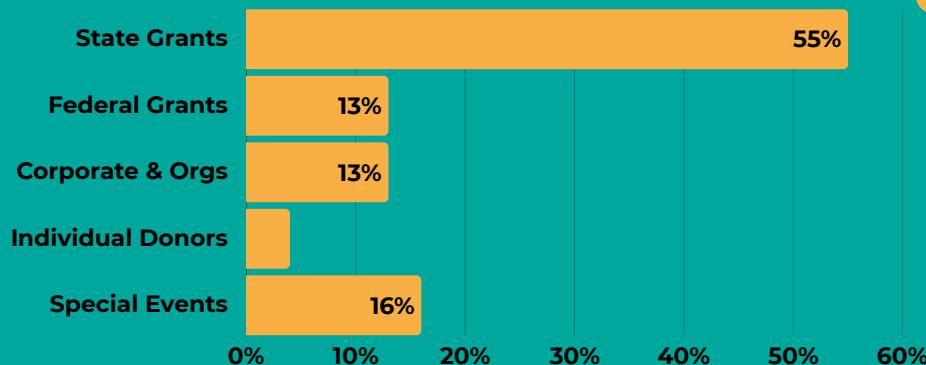
**Brightpaths  
counseling helped me  
heal a lot of my  
codependency to help  
me see that my baby  
and I deserve better  
for our future. I am  
healing and will make  
this program proud  
one day.**

*-Clarke County mom*

# 2025 Funding

This year has been tumultuous financially. Over a quarter million dollars in Federal and state grants were cut from our budget. Those reductions could have meant fewer services and put families in danger, but that didn't happen. Because of generous donors, new grants, and increased local support, we've already cut our deficit by over 50%. Our services have held strong and parents are continuing to learn how to build safe, stable homes, and local children are growing up in strong families.

FY26 Budget



\$1.8M  
ASSETS

\$475,000  
LIABILITIES (MORTGAGE)

\$704,000  
CASH ON HAND

Prevention is  
Economical

**\$210,000**

**SAVED PER CHILD**

\*DHS, KidsCount, DPH. Learn more at  
<https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/child-abuse-neglect-statistics-in-georgia>

The Total Direct Cost for ONE Child Maltreatment Victim's Lifetime is about \$226,822. The cost to the agency per family to participate in Healthy Families is about \$4,200 per year, making the total cost over 4 years in the program \$16,800 per family (multiple children may benefit from a single family's enrollment).

Platinum  
Transparency  
2025

Candid.

We received a "very clean" financial audit once again this year! We maintain the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid. We have an exceptionally high liquidity rate and maintain over eight months of operating expenses in reserves.

\*For our full financials, latest independent audit, and most recent 990, please visit our website.

# We have a vision... ...a community free of child abuse and neglect

Will you help  
us get there?

## Spread the Word!

Know a family that could use some extra support?

Send us a referral! Can you connect us with like-minded organizations, donors, or volunteers?

Let us know!

## Join us at an event:

Pins for Prevention, Starry Starry Night, Concert on the Lawn, and new this year...Mahjong for Moms are coming up- we hope you'll join us! Make sure to follow us on social or join our email list for dates and info.

## Donate today:

Make your tax-deductible donation today and support our programs and families.



## Build our Playground!

Our brand new outdoor playspace opens at the Family Resource Center this spring. Dedicate a playground piece or stepping stone to support families for years to come.





**brightpaths**

**strengthening families.  
brightening futures.**

